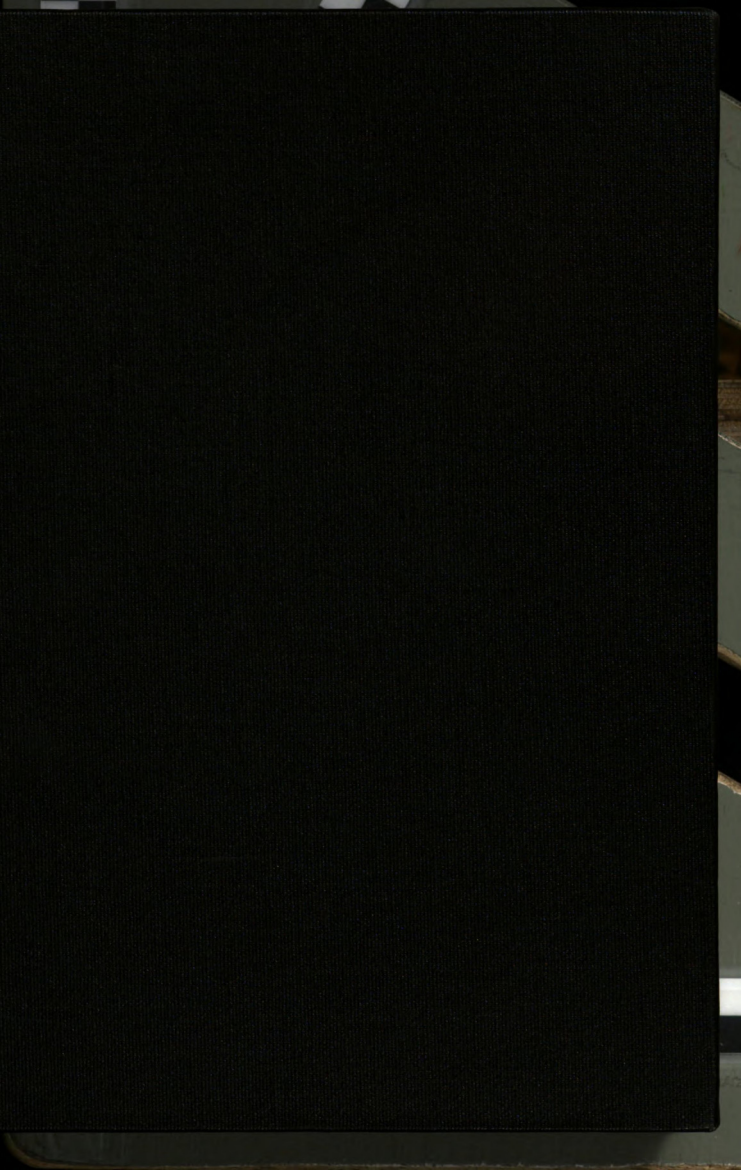
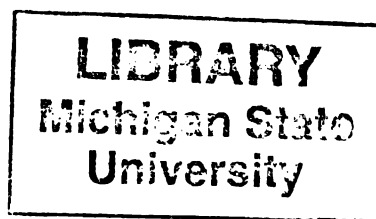




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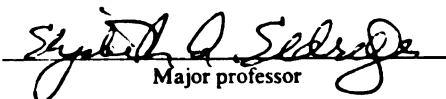
POWER AND GENDER IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN HISTORY:
POWER RELATIONS IN THE ERA OF QUEEN
LABOTSIBENI GWAMILE MDLULI OF SWAZILAND,
ca. 1875-1921

presented by

MANELISI GENGE

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of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in HISTORY


Major professor

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**POWER AND GENDER IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN HISTORY: POWER
RELATIONS IN THE ERA OF QUEEN LABOTSIBENI
GWAMILE MDLULI OF SWAZILAND, ca. 1875-1921**

VOLUME I

By

Manelisi Genge

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of History

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ABSTRACT

POWER AND GENDER IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN HISTORY: POWER RELATIONS IN THE ERA OF QUEEN LABOTSIBENI GWAMILE MDLULI OF SWAZILAND, ca. 1875-1921

By

Manelisi Genge

This dissertation examines the history of the Swazi leadership's dealing with the colonization of Swaziland by the governments of Great Britain and the Transvaal Boer Republic (South African Republic) from the 1880s to 1921. The first colonial power to establish its rule in Swaziland was the Transvaal with the help of the British from 1890 to 1899. However, the British did not allow the Transvaal to have an absolute colonial control on Swaziland. The British kept the Transvaal on check, both for the protection of British economic interests in Swaziland and for the preservation of the semi-autonomous status of the Swazi under a colonial rule. Thus, instead of an outright Boer colonial authority in Swaziland, the British and the Boer governments had entered into an intricate series of Conventions beginning from 1881 by which they pledged to safeguard the independence of the emaSwati.

The terms of the Conventions were exclusively initiated and finalized by the governments of Britain and the Transvaal (Anglo-Transvaal), and were only presented to the Swazi leaders as *fait accompli*. Therefore such Conventions formed the basis of what I term the hidden transcript of these powers in their dealings with the Swazi leaders. According to the arrangements of such Conventions the Transvaal government established a 'protectorate administration,' itself an ambiguous colonial rule, over

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Swaziland, while Britain was on the sideline ready to call a foul anytime the Transvaal administrators transgressed the terms of the Conventions which created the latter's rule in the country.

The Boer administration was contested by Swazi leaders from its inception in 1890 until October 1899 when it ended with the outbreak of the South African War between the Boers and the British. From October 1889 when King Mbandzeni died, Swaziland was ruled by women leaders, Queen Regent Tibati Nkambule and Queen Mother Labotsibeni. Thus it was their leadership which resisted colonialism. Labotsibeni had a long history of involvement in Swazi politics since the days of her husband, King Mbandzeni, who consulted her on important state affairs. From 1895 to 1899 Labotsibeni ruled the emaSwati as co-leader with her son Paramount Chief Bhunu. Bhunu died in 1899. From 1899 to 1921 Labotsibeni became the sole leader of the emaSwati in her capacity as the Queen Regent.

After the South African War the British established their colonial rule in Swaziland in August 1902. From August 1902 to 1921 Labotsibeni devoted her energy challenging the British colonial state on various issues ranging from land to legal jurisdiction over the emaSwati. In this dissertation I explore some of her encounters with the Boer and British colonial regimes. The power relations I deal with in this work were triangular: Swazi-British-Boers. However, after the war in 1902 the power relations became bipolar, i.e., Swazi leaders versus the British colonial state. In this study I have shown that Swazi royal women have played significant and multifaceted roles in Swazi politics than they are appreciated in the existing historiography of Swaziland.

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DEDICATION

To my parents for their love and support
of my endeavors

To my beloved aunt, Notozi Xaba, the first
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My Ph.D. Program has taken a longer time than I had anticipated and I accumulated many debts in the process. Many people have in one way or another contributed to my enduring this long journey. To mention all of them would amount to another chapter of this work. Instead, I wish to acknowledge my appreciation of their multifaceted support, without which I would not have completed my doctoral studies. I would like to thank only a few individuals by their names. First and foremost I would like to thank members of my family and a very special friend without whose financial assistance I would never have been able to set my foot on a university campus. They are my eldest brother Barnard and his wife Nokuphumla Virginia Genge, my sister Kholiswa and my friend Advocate B.R.T. Tokota. I doubt that I will ever be able to repay the sacrifices these individuals made to make sure that I acquire my Bachelor's degree. My brother, the late Aaron Genge and his wife Nomzwake Jessica Genge made a unique contribution by providing me with a friendly home environment and material support. By doing so, they helped me to adjust smoothly from switching from my working life to that of a full-time graduate student in the United States of America.

I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to all the abovementioned individuals for their further contributions in various forms during my fieldwork research for this dissertation in 1996 in South Africa and Swaziland. Given my meager research funds, I would not have managed to conduct the kind of research I did without their help. Apart

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from the fact that I am very much obliged to all of them for putting their huge sums of money into my education without expecting me to repay them, I can honestly say that I will always remember all what they did for me. Few people, myself excluded, could do what they have done for me. *Nangamso Mangqosini, kunye nakuwe Matshaya, Mbathane!*

I appreciate the work of my dissertation committee: professors Elizabeth A. Eldredge, Harry Reed, David Robinson and Gordon T. Stewart. Their comments have greatly improved the quality of this dissertation. I had benefitted from their seminar classes long before I wrote this dissertation. The influence of these scholars is visible in this dissertation.

My greatest debt is to Professor Elizabeth A. Eldredge, who directed this study. Her constructive criticisms and encouragement led to the quality of this work and to my staying on track until the end of this dissertation. She created a conducive atmosphere for me to advance my analyses and interpretations beyond the existing comfort zones of scholarship. By so doing, she enabled me to reach a more nuance understanding of the topic at hand. I benefitted greatly from her immense knowledge of the history of the region, both in precolonial and colonial times and issues of gender in history. She made invaluable suggestions on the organization, style and clarity of the presentation. She also provided me with all kinds of support and encouragement at appropriate occasions. I wish to express my gratitude to her for the efficiency and thoughtfulness with which she

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directed this dissertation. I will always treasure the experience of working with her as my advisor. I am much obliged to her for all types of support she provided me with from the time I applied to MSU throughout the period of my graduate studies. Professor Eldredge treated me more like a colleague than a student and I greatly commend her for such a treatment.

A number of colleagues have read and commented on certain draft chapters of this dissertation and I would like to express my gratitude to them for their time and valuable feedback. They are Professor Martin Daly, Drs Abannik Hino and Jeff Woods and my graduate student colleagues Cheikh Anta Mbacke Babou and Mohammed Faaiz Gierdien. Most of these colleagues were very helpful in jump-starting my writing, especially when my writing morale was at a lowest ebb. My friend Somadoda Fikeni has been an invaluable reference point for my concerns regarding the discipline of Political Science. I spent countless hours with Fikeni designing maps and other illustrations of this work. For all his assistance I wish to express my appreciation to him – thank you Xesibe. I look forward to years of collaborative work with him. I also wish to thank Kathleen Baker, Digital Sources Center, Michigan State University Library, for her professional touch on some of the maps in this work. Wilson L. Ndovie saved me from last minute frustrations when my computer introduced glitches in footnotes of this work. We spent numerous sleepless hours together painstakingly diagnosing and rectifying the problem. Thank you so much Wilson for your invaluable assistance.

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My acknowledgments would be incomplete without my tribute to Professor Alan R. Booth and the late Mrs Vaidah Tsebe. I am greatly indebted to Professor Booth for initiating me into the history of Swaziland when he directed my Master's thesis at Ohio University, Athens. Since then, he has been one of my continuous supporters for this study and has read and commented on many versions of its proposal. I doubt that I would have studied the history of Swaziland, were it not for his encouragement. Booth further assisted me to quickly find my way in the Swaziland National Archives when we met there for our respective research projects in summer 1994. He also generously shared with me some of his data from the Colonial Office, London. As it will be obvious to a reader of this dissertation, I am enriched by his works on Swaziland. Thus, I wish to express my gratitude for his varied help and support for this study. The late Mrs. Vaidah Tsebe, the then librarian at the University of the North, South Africa, was the first person to suggest to me that I consider going overseas for my further studies. She explained to me the limitations of studying African history at South African universities. Herself a graduate of the US universities, she encouraged me to apply for a Fulbright fellowship to pursue a Master's degree in a US academic institution where I would be exposed to course work, an aspect that was still lacking in South African universities. It would have been impossible for me to have come to the US at the time I did and to be where I am today had it not been Vaidah's advice and her continuous support. She knew how to talk me out of what at the time appeared to me a secure position at my work at the University

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On the other side of the Atlantic I benefitted greatly from individuals who read various versions of my proposal for of this work. Professor Gail Gerhart read my proposal at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) where I met her while I was doing my research in 1996. She will quickly recognize her input in this work. She offered a profound suggestion on specific works for theoretical framework of this dissertation. I wish to thank her so much. I am appreciative of Professor Carolyn Hamilton's, Wits, valuable comments on various versions of the proposal for this work. She also warmly welcomed me to the Department of Anthropology during my fieldwork in 1996 and she invited me to the seminars organized by this department. Professor Philip Bonner had, like others, read both the predissertation and the final proposal of this work. I appreciate his informative remarks on all my proposals. Hamilton and Bonner graciously gave me access to the documents in the Swaziland Oral History Project at Wits, while they were still working on the project. Dr. Patrick Harries, University of Cape Town, has enriched my predissertation proposal with his insightful feedback in 1994 during my predissertation research in Cape Town.

At the University of Swaziland (UNISWA) the following historians read the proposal for this dissertation: Dr. Bonginkosi Sikhondze, Dr. Ackson Kanduza, Mr. Rotter Sicheme Mamba and the late Professor M.H.Y. Kaniki. They all showed great support for my project, and did their best to create a conducive research atmosphere. I

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wish to thank them all for everything they did to make sure that my research in Swaziland was a success. I will always treasure the numerous occasions I had conversations with Mamba and the late Professor Kaniki. Such conversations compelled me to rethink some of my earlier assumptions on the topic of this dissertation. Mamba even generously gave me some of Labotsibeni's photos and a map of Swaziland under chiefly power. Kaniki's subsequent seminar paper provided me with an insightful intellectual view on the history of Swaziland, an angle I would have otherwise missed. The late Dr. Gerald Kunene read and commented on the earlier version of the proposal of this dissertation in summer 1994 during my predissertation feasibility study in Swaziland. He also provided me with accommodation at his house for the duration of my stay in the country. I am greatly indebted to him and his family for their hospitality without which I would not have afforded to stay for such a long period of time in Swaziland. Eric Sibanda created a friendly environment for me outside my research sites. He helped me to intermingle with the Swazi community on social events. I appreciate his help in interpreting for me a poem on Labotsibeni written by Thoko Ginindza. I wish to thank him for his hospitality.

Various librarians and archivists made my fieldwork research experience a memorable one and I wish to register my appreciation of their good work. Paiki Muswazi and Alpheus Dlamini at the Special Collection, UNISWA Library created a friendly research atmosphere for me. Muswazi opened doors for me which would have otherwise remained closed. I am indebted to his valuable comments on my proposal and for

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keeping me informed of the new acquisitions in the Special Collection and of current research by historians at UNISWA. Without his help, it would have taken me much longer to know about Professor Kaniki's seminar paper on the colonial history of Swaziland, which Kaniki presented and submitted to the Library long after I had left the country. Muswazi continues to be a significant link between me and the documents at UNISWA and the Swaziland National Archives, Lobamba. I am much obliged to him for all his assistance.

Sibongile Nxumalo and princess Shiyosi Dlamini fully embraced me as a researcher at the Swaziland National Archives. Nxumalo helped me to identify informants for oral interviews for this study and facilitated my meetings with such informants. She generously offered to give me a ride to meet the informants. Surely without her assistance, I would not have secured any meeting with the few informants I interviewed. I wish to express my gratitude to her for all she did for my research. That I ended up not including the information from the few oral interviews in this dissertation does not diminish her inestimable help toward the interviews. The late William Shiba helped me more than I could ever say in words. He photocopied every document I have from the Swaziland National Archives. I benefitted much from his vast knowledge of the archives. I was honored when he accepted my request for him to be my guide when I decided to travel throughout Swaziland. He explained the historical significance of each place we visited. By so doing, he enriched my knowledge of Swaziland. I was very

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I would like to acknowledge my appreciation of the work of the librarians and archivists of the following institutions in South Africa: Wits Historical Papers and the Swaziland Oral History Project at Wits, Government Archives in Pretoria, State Library in Pretoria, State Archives in Pietermaritzburg, State Archives in Cape Town, Killie Campbell Africana Library in Durban, and South African Library in Cape Town.

I would not have undertaken my graduate studies at Michigan State University without financial support. I would like to thank Professor Cosmo Pieterse, Ohio University, Athens, for providing me with a crucial logistical financial support by being my sponsor when I was moving from Ohio University to MSU. My greatest debt goes to Gifford B. Doxsee, emeritus professor of history at Ohio University, without whose financial assistance I would not have completed my studies at MSU. Doxsee funded my graduate program at MSU from its beginning to the end. He made a substantial financial contribution to my fieldwork research funds. I was only able to devote an undivided attention in summer 1999 to complete writing this dissertation because of funding from him. No amount of words could adequately express my indebtedness to Doxsee. Suffice it to say that I only hope that I would be able to reciprocate his generosity and to pass on his legacy to others. Doxsee has taught me one fundamental lesson in life: to be generous and sensitive to those who are in less fortunate situations, but struggling to improve their lives. I am much obliged to him for all his financial assistance and multilayered support.

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I would also like to thank MSU's History Department for graduate assistantships, financial support to travel to conferences in the US and South Africa where I presented some of the early draft chapters of this work. The Department of History financially supported both my predissertation feasibility study and the fieldwork research of this dissertation in Swaziland and South Africa. I further wish to recognize the following MSU offices for funding my fieldwork research for this work: Provost, Graduate School, Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, College of Arts and Letters, International Studies Program, and the Center for Advanced Study of International Development. I wish to thank the Office for International Students and Scholars for its financial assistance on numerous occasions during my course work and the write-up phase of this dissertation. I also wish to thank the African Studies Center (ASC) at MSU for offering me graduate assistantships during the of writing phase of this work and its continued support thereafter. Working with Dr. John Metzler at the ASC has been a great joy for me.

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PREFACE

The historiography of Swaziland could be categorized under three broad themes: the rule of kings over their subjects, the mineral and land concessions which were allegedly granted by the Swazi kings to Europeans during the nineteenth-century, and the Swazi labor in European-owned industries or farms both in Swaziland and in South Africa. Each of these themes has received considerable scholarly attention. We have an academic knowledge about how the Swazi kings from the Dlamini dynasty migrated from the present-day Mozambique to the present-day Swaziland, where they established their reign from the mid eighteenth-century.

The early Swazi kings had conquered the original inhabitants of Swaziland. In this work, I refer to this conquest era as a colonial period, during which the Dlamini and their followers from the southern-east coast of Africa came to Swaziland and colonized the societies which they found there. By characterizing the early settlement of Swaziland by the Dlamini and their followers as colonialism, I suggest that we use the meaning of the term colonialism in its generic and broadest connotation, i.e., an act of establishing a colony or a settlement imposed on the original inhabitants by a group of people from outside or foreign area. Therefore, I consider the Dlamini settlement in Swaziland as a settler colonialism. By applying the concept of colonialism in this fashion, I propose that we rescue this term from its sole association with the expansion of European settlements or capital to other parts of the world. The restriction of the term colonialism to denote European expansion has resulted in a one-sided scholarly use of its meaning. In other

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Consequently, the story of Europeans had emerged in academic arena as a story of adventurers and expansionists as if other nations did not possess such attributes. This parochial scholarly usage of the phrase colonialism could be amended by using this concept in its generic sense, as I have done in this dissertation.

Royal politics in Swaziland had been contested by various princes of the Dlamini kings since the days of the establishment of the Dlamini dynasty in Swaziland during the 1760s. The competition for succession to the Swazi throne upon death of a king was further complicated by the fact that Swazi kings had practiced polygamous marriage for various reasons including political ones. Swazi queens became key players whose status, positions and characters were considered by the royalists as critical in the resolution of princely succession struggles for the throne.

Like elsewhere in the world Swazi kings had possessed unlimited power as heads of a monarchy. Consequently, they are known to have occasionally used their power in arbitrary ways. In order to curb such abuses of power the Dlamini royalists introduced an innovation in Swazi politics by allowing a mother of a king to share the throne with her son as a co-head of the monarchy in her capacity as the queen mother. This innovation was based on a perception that a king's mother could restrain her son from abusing power. This novelty paved the way for the queen mother to play important functions in ritual ceremonies for kingship and to be an active participant in Swazi politics. The involvement of a queen mother in such ceremonies and in Swazi politics led to the

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creation of a position of a queen regent which turned out to be the highest office to be occupied by a queen mother after a death of a king, especially during the minority of an heir apparent. According to Swazi politics a king was selected from the princes of a Dlamini king after the latter's death. The prince was usually selected to kingship while he was a minor, and during his minority the throne was held by the queen regent for him until he reached his majority. The queen regent was usually the person who had held a position of queen mother prior to the king's death. In this dissertation I analyze the role of a queen mother and queen regent in Swazi politics, using the era of queen mother and later queen regent Labotsibeni Gwamile Mdluli. In this sense, this work deals with Swazi royal women in politics. The role of queen mothers in Swazi politics has so far received little scholarly attention. Our knowledge of the politics of the Swazi monarchy cannot be complete until we know the history of the Swazi queens in such politics. This study paves the way for further research on the history of the role of royal women in Swazi politics.

A narrative of the precolonial and colonial history of the Swazi people in Swaziland has been constructed from oral and written sources by a variety of scholars and is generally agreed upon in spite of the ambiguities of early events and dates. In the 1760s a ruling dynasty known as the Dlamini along with its followers migrated to the present-day Swaziland where it conquered the indigenous inhabitants of mainly Sotho and Tsonga descent. (For a discussion of landmarks of the early history of Swaziland up to the arrival of Europeans in the 1880s, see chapter two below.) Here suffices it to point out only the outlines of the history of the Swazi people in present-day Swaziland,

especially that of its key players who are discussed in this dissertation.

The history of the Dlamini dynasty in Swaziland is traceable from the area east of the Lubombo Range in present-day Mozambique. The genealogy of the Dlamini dynasty which usually begins with Dlamini, the father of Mswati I, whose leadership era predates the migration of the Dlamini dynasty and their followers to the present-day Swaziland, provides a background to the Dlamini history in Swaziland. The current Swazi kingship ritual refers to Ngwane II as the first Dlamini king who led Dlamini rulers with their followers from east of the Lumbo Mountains via the Phongolo and Ngwavuma rivers in northern Zululand to the southern part of present-day Swaziland. Ngwane was born about 1735.

However, it is King Sobhuza I, also known as Somhlolo, born about 1780, north of the Phongolo River, who is regarded to have laid the foundation of the Dlamini dynasty or kingship in Swaziland. He became the leader of the Swazi people in Swaziland upon the death of his father Ndvungunyane about 1805. He is known for bringing together various conglomerations of family formations under a loose Dlamini dynasty. Sobhuza is also credited with initiating the practice of marrying the daughters of powerful kings who were the neighbors of the emerging Swazi kingdom under Dlamini dynasty. For example, in 1813 he married Tsandzile Ndwandwe, daughter of Zwide Ndwandwe of the Ndwandwe dynasty from the south of Phongolo River in northern Zululand. To further strengthen the diplomatic ties between the Dlamini and Ndwandwe dynasties, Sobhuza sent his sister princess Phosile to Zwide to be the latter's wife. Thus, a process of using women in kingly marriages in forging geopolitical alliances started and

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continued, for our purpose in this study, until 1921. Sobhuza also started a practice of marrying women from powerful families within Swaziland and sending out Dlamini princesses for marriages to influential families within Swaziland. By so doing, he linked the Dlamini dynasty to influential families within the emerging Swazi kingdom. Thus, queen mothers and queen regents such as Tsandzile, Labotsibeni and others found their ways to the corridors of power in the Dlamini dynasty. (For a discussion of the numerous queen mothers and queen regents who became prominent in Swazi politics and the manner in which they were married to the Dlamini kings, see chapter three below.) Once inside the Dlamini dynasty such queens became key figures in Swazi politics by refashioning them and by resolving princely succession disputes. Even more, they became prominent nationalist leaders who protected and defended the Swazi monarchy from attempts at annihilation by Transvaal Boer and British governments during the era of European colonization of Swaziland from the 1880s to 1921. Sobhuza I's son Mswati II, c. 1825 to 1865, is credited for consolidating his father's work of building a kingdom. Born about 1825, Mswati is reputed to have forged alliances with the Transvaal Boers in the mid-1840s against his neighbors such as the BaPedi on the west of Swaziland and the AmaZulu on the south. Mswati is also known to have granted the first land concession to the Transvaal Boers in return for the military defensive alliances. Europeans gave Swaziland its present-day name after King Mswati.

The land and mineral concessions which led to the influx of Europeans (Transvaal Boers and the British and few Germans from the Transvaal) intensified from 1882 to 1889. In addition to grazing pastures and mineral concessions Swaziland also attracted

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interests and elicited mutual jealousy from the Transvaal Boer and the British governments because of its strategic position next to the Delagoa Bay on the Indian Ocean. The Transvaal Boer government wanted Swaziland as a gateway to the Portuguese Delagoa Bay in Lourenço Marques in their struggle against the British control of the Durban and Cape Town ports. For their part, the British wanted to deprive the Boers an unchecked control of Swaziland because they wanted to thwart the Boer plans to have access to Delagoa Bay and to protect British economic interests in Swaziland, which had accrued from mineral concessions. Consequently, Swaziland became a pawn in the Anglo-Boer geopolitics from the 1880s to the outbreak of the South African War of 1899 to 1902.

During the Anglo-Boer competition over the control of Swaziland, the country was under the leadership of King Mbandzeni from 1875 to 1889. Mbandzeni was born about 1857, succeeded to the Swazi throne in 1875 and died in 1889. He was Labotsibeni Gwamile Mdluli's husband. He was chosen to succeed to the throne partly because of Sisile Khumalo, who became his queen mother. In 1881 following her death Sisile Khumalo was succeeded by Tibati Madvolomafisha Nkambule (c.1840 and died in 1895), as queen mother. When Mbandzeni died in 1889, Nkambule became queen regent and Labotsibeni became queen mother after her son Ngwane V (Bhunu), a minor, was chosen to succeed his father Mbandzeni to the Swazi throne. It was during the leadership of Tibati Nkambule as queen regent and Labotsibeni Mdluli as queen mother that the Transvaal Boer and British governments attempted to impose their colonial rule upon Swaziland. Both women resisted the imposition of the European colonial rule on Swaziland until

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Nkambule's death in 1895. Thereafter, Labotsibeni became the main voice which led the Swazi resistance against colonial rule until she handed over the reins of the Swazi political power to her grandson Sobhuza II in 1921.

In this dissertation I show that the Swazi leaders were self-conscious in their dealings with the Transvaal Boers and the British, and the Swazi's overriding aims were the preservation of their independence and the protection of their monarchy from complete destruction by the Anglo-Transvaal governments. By so doing, the Swazi leaders became active agents who influenced the shape of the colonial state in the country.

This work is not a biography of Labotsibeni. I only use the era of Labotsibeni as a vantage point from which to analyze the historical events regarding the colonization of Swaziland. My view is that, after all, the colonial powers were not overwhelmingly powerful as they are often portrayed to be in literature which deals with European colonialism in Africa. In this study I have demonstrated that precolonial political institutions played a significant role in shaping the direction of affairs in the colonies. What is more, is that in the case of Swaziland we find women leaders who did not lose power to the colonial state. This contrasts with the findings of other Africanists elsewhere, who have argued that colonialism had resulted in the loss of political power by women. I situate my discussion in the context of precolonial Swazi political institutions. Thus, I have given as a background an account of the precolonial Swaziland, especially the place and role of Swazi queens in Swazi politics. I emphasize the history of queen mothers and queen regents in this work. I employ the framework of power relations to

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In this study I have demonstrated the importance of reconstructing the history of European colonialism in Africa in the context of the history which predates it. There is currently a revival of kingship rule in Africa, which had been practiced before the advent of European colonialism. For example, the Ugandan president, Yoweri Museveni reconstituted the Buganda kingdom in Uganda in 1993. The Buganda kingdom was destroyed by the British colonial state almost a half century ago. The Uganda's Bugandan kingdom has celebrated its first royal wedding on August 27, 1999, when King (Kabaka) Ronald Mutesa II married Sylvia Nagginda Luswata. There are talks about revival of kingship, though in restricted forms, in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Namibia and in post-colonial/apartheid South Africa and in other parts of Africa. Thus there will be a scholarly need to know more about the role of the wives or mothers of kings in royal politics. Scholars then might draw insights from the role of such figures in the past. This dissertation is an addition to a growing body of literature on the role of royal women in politics.

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Chapter One

SOURCES, METHODOLOGY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

Swaziland remains one of the very few countries in present day Africa which is governed by a monarchy. In fact, it practices a dual monarchical authority, i.e., it has two heads of state, a king and his mother in her official capacity as a queen mother. What is even more interesting is that the present day royal family descends directly from the precolonial royal dynasty. Swazi queen mothers and queen regents played significant roles to preserve the Swazi throne against annihilation by European colonial powers, the Transvaal Boers and the British.

Swaziland is one of the smallest countries, if not the smallest country in southern Africa. However, the historical events which occurred in Swaziland from the second half of the nineteenth-century to the early twentieth-century speak directly to the experiences of various peoples in precolonial and colonial Africa and other parts of the world. In this dissertation I explore historical developments in the political history of Swaziland from about 1875 to 1921 in order to address the broader themes of power and gender in southern African history. I am particularly concerned with the manner in which royal women in precolonial and colonial Swaziland secured and protected their position as dual heads of state with their sons as kings, and with their participation in the politics of Swaziland. I examine the way in which these women mobilized the power of the Swazi monarchy against the encroachment of the British and Transvaal colonial governments from the last decade of the nineteenth-century to the early twentieth-century. In brief,

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this dissertation is in its broader context about the study of the role of Swazi queens, queen mothers and queen regents in the politics of Swaziland during the precolonial and colonial periods. In its narrower scope the dissertation focuses on the era of queen Labotsibeni Gwamile Mdluli as a time frame within which it explores its subject matter.

This chapter has two aims: first, to provide a brief discussion of the sources and methodology used in this dissertation. Second, it reviews relevant literature in order to identify appropriate insights from secondary sources and the relevance of such insights to the topic at hand. The literature review is also intended to identify scholarly gaps in the historiography of Swaziland and how this work aims to address some of such lacunae. The literature reviewed here sheds light on refining and defining the main concepts of the work: power, gender and power relations. Therefore, by reviewing other works which employ these two terms, this chapter attempts to situate this dissertation within the larger scholarly field of power relations and the role of women in history. This dissertation uses gender as one of its analytical concepts. By so doing, this work revises our existing knowledge on some aspects of the history of Swaziland as well as in keeping with some of the concerns of the practitioners of women in history. Africanist historians who focus on women emphasize the importance of employing the concept of gender as an analytical tool.

The chapter does not provide an exhaustive literature review. Instead, it selects only key works in the field. There is a thick literature that deals with women in history. However, this chapter is concerned mainly with literature which focuses on the themes of power, gender, queens, queen mothers, queen-regents, and briefly the history of European

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colonialism in Africa with an emphasis on the colonial state. Likewise, I review only the works on the history of Swaziland which fall within the scope of the dissertation, namely, precolonial, colonial eras and women's history. Works which deal with the history of post-colonial Swaziland are not reviewed here, for they fall outside the scope of this work. Thus, this chapter has narrowed the range of the works it reviews.

This dissertation falls within the history of Africa during the era of European colonialism.¹ It is primarily concerned with the history of power relations between the

¹The themes of European colonialism in Africa and the colonial state have recently received a renewed scholarly attention and new insights are still emerging with regard to the nature of colonialism, its legacy and its variations from place to place. See for example, a collection of essays in David Robinson and Jean-Louis Triad, eds., with Ghislaine Lydon, assistant editor, Le temps des marabouts: Itinéraires et stratégies islamiques en Afrique occidentale française v. 1880-1960 (Paris: Karthala, 1997); Mahmood Mamdani, Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of late Colonialism (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996); Jürgen Osterhammel (translated from German by Shelley L. Frisch), Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1997, first published in 1995); M.H.Y. Kaniki, "The Swazi Monarchy and the Dynamics of Colonialism" (Paper presented at the History Research Seminar at the University of Swaziland, January 22, 1997), pp. 1-50; A. Adu Boahen, African Perspectives on Colonialism (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994, first published 1987); Kristin Mann and Richard Roberts, eds., Law in Colonial Africa (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991); Martin Chanock, Law, Custom and Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); U.O. Umozurike, International Law and Colonialism in Africa (Enugu, Nigeria: Nwamife, 1979); Richard A. Voeltz, "The European Economic and Political Penetration of South West Africa, 1884-1892," International Journal of African Historical Studies, 17, 4 (1984), 623-639; John Lonsdale, "States and Social Processes in Africa: A Historiographical Survey," African Studies Review, XXIV, 2/3 (June/September 1981), 139-225; Mona Etienne and Eleanor Leacock, eds., Women and Colonization: Anthropological Perspectives (New York: Praeger, 1980); D.A. Low, Lion Rampant: Essays in the Study of British Imperialism (London: Frank Cass, 1973), and Judith Van Allen, "Sitting on a Man: Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women," Canadian Journal of African Studies, VI, ii (1972), 165-181. For the colonial state, see Crawford Young, The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Bruce

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Swazi monarchy and the Transvaal Boer Republic (South African Republic) during the 1890s on the one hand, and between the Swazi royal house and the British government from the 1880s to 1921, on the other. In this sense, this work focuses on power relations at the interstate level. It examines the negotiation of power in a situation where European colonialism was in the process of being imposed upon an existing political authority, without the latter being subjected to a military conquest. In the history of typology of European colonial expansion, Swaziland is classifiable under a category "where an imperial power establishes its dominance over a pre-existing political authority which continues to exist, but under its dominance."² Therefore, here we have a colonial situation conducive for the study of power relations between the precolonial authority which continued to exist and the colonial authority, which was the British power.

From the 1890s to 1921 the Swazi monarchy was presided over by queen-mother and later queen-regent Labotsibeni Gwamile Mdluli, a widow after the death of her husband King Mbandzeni in November 1889. I also examine the role of queen mothers

Berman, Control & Crisis in Colonial Kenya: The Dialectic of Domination (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1990); Margot Lovett, "Gender Relations, Class Formation, and the Colonial State in Africa," in Jane L. Parpart and Kathleen A. Staudt, eds. Women and the State in Africa (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990, first published, 1989), pp. 23-46, and Marjorie Mbilinyi, "'This Is an Unforgettable Business': Colonial State Intervention in Urban Tanzania," in *ibid.* pp. 111-129. Scholars of labor history are beginning to explore links between European colonial racism and the making of African labor force. See, for example, Jeanne Marie Penvenne, African Workers And Colonial Racism: Mozambican Strategies and the Struggles in Luorenço Marques, 1877-1962 (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995).

²D.A. Low, "Lion Rampant," Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, II, 3 (November 1964), 236. Low discusses three classifications of the expansion of European colonialism. See *ibid.*, 236-241.

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and queen regents in Swazi politics within the patriarchal Swazi state that was Swaziland. Labotsibeni reigned as the queen-mother and later as queen-regent in a patriarchal Swazi monarchy. She and her son, King Ngwane V (alias Bhunu) were the dual sovereigns when an Anglo-Transvaal alliance imposed a colonial administration on Swaziland in 1894, which lasted until October 1899. She was the main head of the Swazi state in 1902 when the British colonial power established itself in Swaziland. Thus, this work is also about power and gender in southern African history with specific reference to the era of Labotsibeni of Swaziland.

The Research: Sources and Methodology

The research for this work started in June 1994 with the support of a predissertation grant from the Social Science Research Council, New York, which allowed me to conduct a feasibility study in Swaziland and South Africa for a three month period, from June to August. But, in a more general sense, my interest in the history of Swaziland started in 1990 when I was at Ohio University in Athens, where I wrote my Master's thesis, under the supervision of Professor Alan R. Booth, on the history of Swaziland. Since I have been at Michigan State University, I have written numerous seminar papers on the history of Swaziland.

The present study relies heavily on archival documents. I have conducted research at the Swaziland National Archives, Lobamba; the University of the

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Witwatersrand Historical Papers and the Swaziland Oral History Project,³ Johannesburg; Killie Campbell Africana Library, Durban; South African Archives and State Library, Pretoria; South African Library and Cape Archives, Cape Town. There is considerable information in the J.S.M. Matsebula Collection at the University of Swaziland Library, and I found some useful data from it.⁴ However, the Matsebula Collection is somehow problematic. Some of the correspondences are not signed. This raises an concern about the authenticity of the documents. Also, some of the individual personalities who wrote correspondences are not identifiable. These shortcomings in these papers compromise the effectiveness of the documents of this collection. This is so because many of the documents in the Matsebula Collection were not generated by him. But with good handling, the Matsebula Collection is still useful for scholars, for it contains some documents which have not been used by scholars of Swazi history, and Matsebula himself has only made partial use of them.

The University of Swaziland has another valuable collection of papers which has not yet received the full attention of scholars. This collection consists of Dr. Ambrose Phesheya Zwane's Papers. Dr. Zwane was the General Secretary of Swaziland political party, the Ngwane National Liberation Congress, also known as the Progressive Party

³Here I wish to thank Professors Philip Bonner and Carolyn Hamilton for granting me access to this Project while they were still indexing, cataloging and processing its data for publication. For information on this Project, see C.A. Hamilton, "The Swaziland Oral History Project," History in Africa, 14 (1987), 383-387. However, I did not find any relevant data for my work from the Swaziland Oral History Project.

⁴For a description of what is contained in the collection, see Dorothy C. Woodson, "The J.S.M. Matsebula Collection at the University of Swaziland," History in Africa, 18 (1991), 381-97.

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which was formed on July 31, 1960. This party was intended to contest leadership in national politics in postcolonial Swaziland. However, Zwane's party was finally eliminated by the Royal-backed Imbokodvo Party and its members were banned from active politics in Swaziland. The Zwane Papers speak to these events and could be useful for a work on the history of the politics of decolonization in Swaziland. Since my work does not address that kind of history, I did not use these papers, but others might be interested to explore their usefulness.

I have also a considerable pertinent data from the Command Papers which I had collected from Ohio University, Athens, Ohio. The bulk of the archival material is from the Swaziland National Archives. These documents were generated for administrative purposes mainly by the British officials who were based in Swaziland and South Africa. But because such officials interacted with the Swazi rulers and other emaSwati whom they viewed important for their plans, the voices and views of these people are present in the archival documents. There are detailed reports of meetings between the British officials in Swaziland, visiting British dignitaries, and the emaSwati leaders. Labotsibeni's statements are prevalent in such documents.

However, the archival materials have certain shortcomings. Like most documents generated within the colonial context, they are colored with prejudice and condescension in vocabulary. They are tainted with self-serving statements and based on assumptions of the superiority of the British ways of life over those of the emaSwati. In their sum, these documents tend to focus on the best deeds by British officials and on largely the worst deeds by the Swazi leadership headed by Labotsibeni. This kind of documentation has

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the hallmark of European prejudices which was common in colonial situations.⁵

The archival documents also have another weakness: they lack proper translation of the views of the emaSwati. Many a times, the documents are at best a representation of the British views, intentions and decisions on the affairs of Swaziland. The limitations of this dissertation derive from my reliance on archival documents, to the exclusion of oral sources. This is a result of financial constraints for conducting oral research in Swaziland. I had a very thin budget for research when I went to the field in 1996. The limited research funds I had permitted me to conduct only archival research in Swaziland and in South Africa. I was told of potential informants by certain individuals at the Swazi National Archives and by some historians and other scholars at the University of Swaziland. However, my lack of funds made it impossible for me to even make any venture toward following up such clues for oral informants. But, I still hope that in the future I will be able to find my way to Swaziland for oral research on the subject of this dissertation. For the purposes of this work I have relied upon the data I have collected from the archives with full acknowledgment of its limitations. In spite of their origins as colonial sources, the written documents include the voices and perspectives of many Swazi whose words, opinions and actions were recorded in reports and correspondence. I apply internal criticism and the insights gained from the notion of hidden transcript to get ideas which lay beyond the colonial correspondences and the Swazi rulers' public pronouncements in all the documents used in this work.

⁵For similar observations in the Americas, see Ronald Wright, Stolen Continents: The "New World" Through Indian Eyes (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992), pp. 3-14.

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Besides archival documents, recently Huw M. Jones has provided scholars of Swazi history with thick data on individuals who played a role, one way or another, in the history of Swaziland until 1902.⁶ This is a valuable source, especially for identification of persons and the context within which they were involved in the affairs of Swaziland. I make use of the data from Jones' work.

This work employs historical analysis as its methodology, that is, it traces the events it deals with from the perspective of historical developments. The work is in its broader sense influenced by Emmanuel Konde's call for a gender balance or a "holistic approach" in the study of politics in Africa. By this, Konde means:

that scholars studying African politics should no longer concentrate on just one sex. Rather, political issues affecting women, such as their lack of power and their absence from decision making positions, must be addressed not as isolated issues but as social relationships within the context of politics as politics not in that of politics as a struggle between the sexes.⁷

This means that studies of women in history ought to take them as part of the political systems. Konde's suggestion for a paradigm shift is an attempt to amend both the traditionalist and revisionist approaches to the study of African history. He points out that a traditionalist approach which emerged in early to mid-twentieth century has focused largely on male, whereas a revisionist approach, beginning in the last quarter-

⁶See Huw M. Jones, A Biographical Register of Swaziland to 1902 (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1993).

⁷Emmanuel Konde, "Reconstructing the Political Roles of African Women: A Postrevisionist Paradigm," Working Paper in African Studies, No. 161, Boston University (1992), p. 20. Konde's paper is an historiographical essay which critiques the revisionist paradigm.

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century, has concerned itself with women in history. In many cases scholars adopting only the traditionalist or the revisionist approaches take extreme positions in their study of African history. As a consequence, their products are ideologically driven, and they miss an important part in the scholarly enterprise of improving our understanding of the past. Konde articulates this well when he says, "the purpose of scholarship is to unveil facts and to interpret those facts in new ways, not to redress imbalances in the literature."⁸ Some historians of southern Africa have adopted a similar approach as suggested by Konde and produced insightful works which capture the experiences of both women and men as they were faced with an encroaching European colonialism.⁹ Others have employed a similar holistic approach as suggested by Konde in their studies of gender relations in precolonial African societies. For example, Sandra Greene employs a similar approach in her study of gender and ethnic relations and change in precolonial Anlo-Ewe community of Upper Slave Coast (now part of present-day Republic of Ghana, on its southeastern part).¹⁰ Other scholars who also advocate a holistic approach argue that, "indeed, the separate treatment of women could serve to confirm their marginal and particularized relationship to those (male) subjects already established as dominant and universal."¹¹ In its narrower, but a crucially significant sense, this dissertation is informed

⁸Konde, "Reconstructing," p. 20.

⁹See for example, Elizabeth A. Eldredge, A South African Kingdom: The Pursuit of Security in Nineteenth-Century Lesotho (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

¹⁰See Sandra E. Greene, Gender, Ethnicity, and Social Change on the Upper Slave Coast: A History of the Anlo-Ewe (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996).

¹¹Joan Wallach Scott, Gender and the Politics of History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 3. For a somehow similar point, see also T.C. McCaskie, "State and Society, Marriage and Adultery: Some Considerations Towards A Social

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by insights gained from Elinor Sosne's work. Sosne is among the early anthropologists to observe the central role of queen mothers in the politics of kingship and how the male-centered scholarship had long neglected to acknowledge these women's role in the politics of their kingdoms.¹² Cecile Dauphin and her colleagues have recently revised the concept of complementarity, which was fashionable among anthropologists such as Sosne and others in the 1970s who focused their studies on gender and power relations. According to this concept, power is equally shared between men and women and that the gender roles were complementary. However, Dauphin and her colleagues argue that the concept of complementarity does not provide a space for the contestation of power between men and women. They point out:

the shadow of contestation is kept at bay by the very reassuring concept of complementarity which neutralizes this threat ahead of time, in order to avoid recognizing its modalities and its specific manifestations. Women's sweetness and peace-keeping qualities flourish in such a context, and the analysis of the masculine and the feminine comes to a deadend [sic], the possibilities of tension and conflict, of rivalry or accession to power being pushed under the rug....The culture definition of female and male worlds can lead to the statement of a real and symbolic balance between them, from which confrontations and violence are absent. Consequently, the assumed need that these two symbolic and practical positions have of each other within a system of equivalent values blurs somewhat the stakes at hand (e.g., compensation, consent, confrontation).¹³

Here I have quoted at length this point by these scholars, for it also speaks directly

History of Pre-Colonial Asante," Journal of African History, 22 (1981), 478.

¹²For a fuller discussion of this, see Elinor Sosne, "Of Biases and Queens: The Shi Past Through an Androgynous Looking Glass," History in Africa, 6 (1979), 225-252.

¹³Cécile Dauphin, Anette Farge, Geneviève Fraisse, Christiane Klapische-Zuber, Rose-Marie Lagrave, Michelle Perrot, Pierrette Pfzerat, Yannick Ripa, Pauline Schmitt-Pantel, and Danièle Voldman, "Women's Culture and Women's Power: An Attempt at Historiography," Journal of Women's History, 1, 1 (Spring 1989), 69.

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to the history of power relations of the queen-mothers and queen-regents with their son or grandson kings in Swaziland. The points articulated in this quote inform my work in fundamental ways.

Other scholars elsewhere in Africa have addressed the usefulness of the approach which focuses mainly on women as a distinct category of society, instead of studying them together with other members of the socio-political economic groups in society. Mba argues that an approach to the study of women depends on various factors such as: “the extent to which sex is the basis of role differentiation and the allocation of power and responsibility in the society. It also depends on the extent to which women act and see themselves primarily as persons of the same sex.”¹⁴ And in the Nigerian case, she argues that it is imperative to study women as a separate category in order “to address the imbalance in the treatment of Nigerian women in Nigerian historiography.”¹⁵ However, the question of scholars’ perceptions of how women were treated in the past, especially in precolonial African societies, is still open to debate. One historian of South African history is critical of what he terms “is a tendency on the part of settler and western historians to criticize Xhosa chiefs for oppressing and exploiting African women.”¹⁶ While conceding that King Maqoma presided over a patriarchal precolonial

¹⁴Nina Emma Mba, Nigerian Women Mobilized: Women's Political Activity in Southern Nigeria, 1900-1965 (Berkeley: University of California, 1982), preface p.viii.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶Timothy J. Stapleton, Maqoma: Xhosa Resistance to Colonial Advance, 1798-1873 (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1994), p. 222. Stapleton specifically cites Jeff Guy, “Gender Oppression in Southern Africa's Precapitalist Societies,” in Cheryl Walker, ed., Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945 (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990), pp. 33-

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Xhosa society on the eastern Cape, Stapleton argues it is, however, "both unfair and unacademic to judge Jongumsobomvu [Maqoma] on the basis of modern western values which neither he nor his wives shared."¹⁷ Though Stapleton might have a valid point, we still need studies on the history of Maqoma's wives and, on or the history of women during Maqoma's reign in order for us to have an appreciation of their position within the Xhosa society. Such a history could be more inclusive in approach, that is, while it

47. The inclusion of women in historical accounts is still in its infancy in the South African historiography. The collection of essays in Walker, ed., Women; Cherryl Walker, Women and Resistance in South Africa (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991, first published 1982); Belinda Bozzoli (with the assistance of Mmantho Nkotshe), Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983 (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991); Iris Berger, "Gender and Working-Class History: South Africa in Comparative Perspective," Journal of Women's History, 1, 2 (Fall 1989), 117-133; Dabi Nkululeko, "The Right to Self-Determination in Research: Azanian Women," in Christine N. Qunta, ed., Women in Southern Africa (Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1987), pp. 88-106; Belinda Bozzoli, "Marxism, Feminism and South African Studies," Journal of Southern African Studies (hereafter JSAS), 9, 2 (April 1983), 139-171; Cherryl Walker, "Review Article: Women's Studies on the Move," JSAS, 13, 3 (April 1987), 433-438; Deborah Gaitskell, "Introduction," JSAS, 10, 1 (October 1983), 1-16; Julia C. Wells, We Now Demand: The History of Women's Resistance to Pass Laws in South Africa (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1993); Julia C. Wells, "Why Women Rebel: A Comparative Study of South African Women's Resistance in Bloemfontein (1913) and Johannesburg (1958)," JSAS, 10, 1 (October 1983), 55-70; Amelia Marie Mariotti, "The Incorporation of African Women into Wage Employment in South Africa, 1920-1970" (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Connecticut, 1979), and Ivy Matsepe, "Underdevelopment and African Women," Journal of Southern African Affairs, II, 2 (April 1977), 135-143, remain largely the most main works on the subject. Therefore, women's history in South Africa is still a new phenomenon. For a most recent historiographical review of works which incorporates women in South Africa, especially during the early colonial period, a period which I emphasize in my work on Swaziland, see Helen Bradford, "Women, Gender and Colonialism: Rethinking the History of the British Cape Colony and its Frontier Zones, c. 1806-70," Journal of African History, 37 (1996), 351-370. It is no exaggeration to say that Zimbabwean historiography which addresses women's history is more matured than the South African one.

¹⁷Stapleton, Maqoma, pp. 222-3.

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discusses the history of the Xhosa society, it ought to inform us about the activities of both women and men. My dissertation attempts to do this by focusing on the activities of both women and men leaders in the Swazi society. Helen Bradford's work, which focuses on the same area of Stapleton's research interests, though still too preliminary in its conceptualization of its subjects of study, has a potential to address the scholarly gap of the absence of women in Stapleton's work.¹⁸

Literature Review

There is now an emerging concern among Africanists about the appropriateness of certain scholarly terms which are originally derived from the western world and are applied to the study of Africa. Various African and African-American scholars either in Africa or in the diaspora are beginning to question what they view as the imposition of the eurocentric theories to the detriment of the afrocentric ones in the study of Africa. Critics of the theories derived from the West argue that such theories are irrelevant to the study of African realities.¹⁹ Konde, a historian of African politics, reminds us that, "in researching politics in Africa it must first be understood, and borne in mind at all times,

¹⁸See Helen Bradford, "Women, Gender and Colonialism: Rethinking the History of the British Cape Colony and Its Frontier Zones, c. 1806-70," Journal of African History, 37 (1996), 351-370. For another work which deals with women in the Cape history within a colonial context, see Pamela Scully, Liberating the Family?: Gender and British Slave Emancipation in the Rural Western Cape, South Africa, 1823-1853 (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1997).

¹⁹For a fuller discussion of this, see Jean Davison, Gender, Lineage, and Ethnicity in Southern Africa (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997), pp. 10-40. For a discussion of the term Afrocentricism from an African-American perspective, see Molefi Kete Asante, The Afrocentric Idea (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987).

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that African politics is different from politics in the Western world: that the conflict between the sexes that has typified political life there is distinctly absent in Africa."²⁰ Here one wonders whether Konde does not confuse silence of African women with the absence of conflict. And the absence of African women scholars might have been one of the reasons for the absence of a scholarship which articulates conflicts between the sexes in African politics. The fact that African women scholars are among the first generation of scholars to focus specifically on women in politics might be an indication of earlier scholarly bias toward men and against women as political actors.²¹ The writing of history; the choice of the topics; themes; analytical concepts used; and the evidence marshaled to support one's argument, all tell us more about an individual historian or a school of thought among historians and probably little about what had actually happened in the past.²²

Therefore, historical writing is about representation of the past. Hence, it is legitimate for historians who concern themselves with writing about the roles of women in history to ask questions, which might even change or challenge the existing historical record. The writing about women is not merely an attempt to add a missing aspect to the

²⁰Konde, "Reconstructing," pp. 19-20.

²¹See Nina Emma Mba and Clara Osinulu below as an example of African women scholars who focus exclusively on women in politics.

²²For a discussion of a similar observation elsewhere, see Christopher Fyfe, "Race, empire and the historians," *Race & Class*, 33, 4 (1992), 15-30. See also Cécil Dauphin, Anette Farge, Geneviève Fraisse, Christiane Klapische-Zuber, Rose-Marie Lagrave, Michelle Perrot, Pierrette Pfzerat, Yannick Ripa, Pauline Schmitt-Pantel, and Danièle Voldman, "Women's Culture and Women's Power: An Attempt at Historiography," *Journal of Women's History*, 1, 1 (Spring 1989), 63-88.

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existing historical account. It is an attempt also to question the validity and accuracy of the existing historiography.²³ Claire C. Robertson has examined the effects of studying women on African history. She argues that the study of women in African history has brought about changes in previously held scholarly views on various topics.²⁴

Konde does concede, however, that a "battle between the sexes" in the scholarship of African politics is an emerging phenomenon. And for an example of this, he quotes Nina Emma Mba's work on Nigerian women's involvement in politics, where she makes the claim that "role differentiation based on sex existed ... in the precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial societies of Nigeria," and contended that "such a focus on women as a separate group is necessary to redress the imbalance in the treatment of Nigerian women in Nigerian historiography."²⁵

To be sure, some Africanists from the West are now joining the camp that is

²³Other practitioners of women's history express the point in my remarks, differently. See for example, Scott, Gender, p. 29.

²⁴See Claire C. Robertson, "Never Underestimate the Power of Women: The Transforming Vision of African Women's History," Women's Studies Int. Forum, 11, 5 (1988), 439-453.

²⁵Konde, "Reconstructing," p. 20. For Mba's arguments, see Nina Emma Mba, Nigerian Women Mobilized: Women's Political Activity in Southern Nigeria, 1900-1965 (Berkeley: University of California, 1982). Recently Mba has co-edited another work which addresses specifically the involvement of Nigerian women in politics. See Clara Osinulu and Nina Mba, eds., Nigerian Women in Politics, 1986-1993 (Ikeja, Nigeria: Malthouse Press Limited, 1996); Nina Mba, "Kaba and Khaki: Women and the Militarized State in Nigeria," in Jane L. Parpart & Kathleen A. Staudt, eds., Women and the State in Africa (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 1990), pp. 69-90, and Judith A. Byfield, "Women, Economy, and The State: A Study of the Adire Industry in Abeokuta (Western Nigeria), 1890-1939" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1993). This is indeed an indication of a growing literature which specifically concerns itself with women's activities.

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dissatisfied with the application of Eurocentric theories to the study of African realities. These scholars are advocating the development of new concepts which better describe the conditions as they are unfolding on the ground in Africa. Critics such as S. Barnett and M. Silverman point out that "the assumption of Western scholars that 'a language of description and analysis exists which can make sense out of the other people's social formations through using the same terms as one uses for one's own [society]' creates liabilities of interpretation."²⁶ Davison, for her part, argues that by this assumption "we [Western scholars] homologize African social experience in terms of our own...we create 'categories of convenience' to help us make sense of the particularities that exist within a global framework."²⁷ Davison concludes her overview of the debate on the importation of Western theories to the study of Africa by reminding us that the debate is still inconclusive. The contribution of African scholars in Africa to the debate and formulation of new theories derived from concepts that are informed by individual experiences is restricted by many factors, such as tight financial constraints and limited resources and lack of good logistics, among others.²⁸

On the basis of the foregoing brief discussion of the debate on the relevance and applicability of Western theories and concepts to the study of Africa, I will still continue to use some of such theories and concepts, but with much awareness of their debatable nature. Even more, as scholars we are now called upon to define them clearly to justify

²⁶Quoted in Davison, Gender, p.10.

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸*Ibid.*

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their applicability, instead of assuming that they are relevant. In the process of defining such concepts, we might also find some universal meanings. When dealing with the colonial period, as this dissertation does, it is important to know both the European understanding of their theories and concepts, and the Africans' understanding of the concepts from their vantage points. A colonial situation was an area of convergence between the West and Africa. Therefore, we need to know something of the thinking of each group for us to reconstruct a balanced picture of the past with its spirit of the time. With this in mind, I now turn to the examination of the concept of power.

The Concepts of Power and Power Relations

Since the early scholarly treatment of the concept of power²⁹, scholars have long noted that the concept is too general and vague. Others have even suggested that this term be abandoned as an analytical tool or called for its more refined definition.³⁰ But, to abandon the term would be an abdication of our responsibility to attempt to understand how human beings interact with each other, and how political, social and economic institutions or governments, and states conduct their affairs. Power is always omnipresent in such situations. Therefore, instead of abandoning the concept, we should

²⁹See for example, The Collected Essays of C. Wright Mills, edited with an Introduction by Irving Louis Horowitz, Power, Politics and People (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963, first published in 1939), and C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956).

³⁰P. H. Partridge, "Some Notes on the Concept of Power," Journal of Political Studies, XI, 2 (1963), 107. Partridge also provides some criticisms of C. Wright Mills' works on the concept of power.

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rather talk of defining it when using it. In fact, the concept of power is now an established analytical tool among political scientists.³¹

However, the concept of power remains largely unexplored by Africanist historians. Even fewer of them have incorporated this concept in their works, though in an indirect fashion.³² The traditional way Africanist historians have dealt with power was and still is within the genre of a diplomatic history.³³ Indeed, the limited use of the concept of power by Africanist historians has resulted generally to our incomplete understanding of the past. One historian has lamented the historians' reluctance to make the concept of power central to their works. He asserted, "it is a refusal to consider power that lies at the root of much disgraceful writing on the subject of change in the past. Power, after all, is the key concept in the study of society."³⁴ British imperial historians,

³¹See for example, a collection of essays on power in Africa by anthropologists and political scientists, in Irving Leonard Markovitz, ed., Studies in Power and Class in Africa (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). See also Irving Leonard Markovitz, Power and Class in Africa: An Introduction to Change and Conflict in African Politics (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1977). For the study of power in post-colonial Africa by a political scientist, see Patrick Chabal, Power in Africa: An Essay in Political Interpretation (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).

³²See for example, Shula Marks, The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986; Shula Marks, "The Ambiguities of Dependence: John L. Dube of Natal," Journal of Southern African Studies, 1, 2 (April 1975), 162-180; and D.A. Low, Lion Rampant: Essays in the Study of British Imperialism (London: Frank Cass, 1973).

³³For example, see Joseph K. Adjaye, Diplomacy & Diplomats in 19th Century Asante (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1996, first published in 1984), Lucie Ann Gallistel Colvin, "Kajoor and Its Diplomatic Relations with Saint-Louis Du Senegal, 1763-1861" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1974), and Douglas Wheeler, "Gungunyane the Negotiator: A Study in African Diplomacy," Journal of African History, IX, 4 (1968), 585-602.

³⁴Tony Judt, "A Clown in Regal Purple: Social History and the Historians," History Workshop, 7 (Spring 1979), 72.

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for their part, indirectly concerned themselves with power as radiating from the British metropolitan to the colonies. They generally started their research with the question, "why was it that some Western peoples expanded their empires so considerably in the nineteenth century."³⁵ Other imperial historians have raised the question, "how was it that 760 British members of the ruling Indian Civil Service could as late as 1939, in the face of the massive force of the Indian national movement led by Gandhi, hold down 378 million Indians?"³⁶ This question speaks also to colonial Africa. At the heart of it lies the notion of power relations between the colonizer and the colonized. Low had addressed the problem by making partial use of Partridge's concept of power. Low has pointed out that in other British colonies, such as in Northern Nigeria, the British ruled the colonies through a system of indirect rule, a situation where the precolonial local authorities "were directly subject to British authority."³⁷

Therefore, this chapter is not concerned with the establishment of the scholarly validity of this concept. Instead, my aim here is to spell out the definition of this term as is employed in this work. Any definition of power has in its core the notion of control. However, Johannes Fabian reminds us that inquiries into power tend to be tautological. He cites as an example of this an assertion that "power is the ability to control X; control

³⁵Quoted in D.A. Low, "Lion Rampant," Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, II, 3 (November 1964), 235. For a summary of the literature on this question, Low cites D.K. Fieldhouse, "Imperialism": An Historiographical Revision," Economic History Review, (1961)

³⁶D.A. Low, "Lion," Political Studies, 235.

³⁷Low, "Lion," Political Studies, p. 238. For Partridge's article, see citation on the early part of this chapter.

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over X is evidence for power.”³⁸ He however, criticizes this assertion of power, for its “narrow circle of reasoning.” Instead, Fabian calls for an analysis and discussion of the objects and targets, which he regards as content of power.³⁹

Power play could be observed in institutions such as political organizations, business, educational, social, military institutions. Institutions are commonly structured in hierarchical forms with human actors or players who occupy various hierarchical positions. In such settings power is defined as the “realistic capacity of a system unit to actualize its ‘interests’ (attain goals, prevent undesired interference, command respect, control possessions, etc) within the context of system-interaction and in this sense to exert influence on processes in the system.”⁴⁰ Others have defined social power as “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his or her own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests.”⁴¹ Writing in the 1960s Mills drew our attention to another aspect of power, namely the capability of a ruler to manipulate consent from the ruled. He asserted, “we

³⁸Johannes Fabian, Language and Colonial Power: The Appropriation of Swahili in the Former Belgian Congo, 1880-1938 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 3.

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰Talcott Parsons, “A Revised Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification,” in Essays in Sociological Theory, rev. ed., (New York: Free Press, 1964), pp. 390-91, quoted by Rosemarie Skaine, Power and Gender: Issues in Sexual Dominance and Harassment (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 1996), p. 65. What is cited by Skaine is a chapter in Parsons’ book.

⁴¹Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, trans. A.M. Henderson, ed., Talcott Parsons, with introduction by Talcott Parsons. (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press of Glencoe, Macmillan, 1947), p. 152, quoted by Skaine, Power and Gender, p. 65. For a similar definition, see also Irving Louis Horowitz, “An Introduction to C. Wright Mills,” in Power, Politics and People: the Collected Essays of C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), edited and with an Introduction by Horowitz, p. 8.

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cannot today assume that in the last resort men [human-beings] must always be governed by their own consent. For among the means of power which now prevail is the power to *manage and to manipulate the consent of men.*"⁴² This statement has universal applicability in most situations of power relations, especially in the practice of politics. African rulers, and for our purposes, the Swazi monarchy, ruled by managing and manipulating the consent of their subjects through various royal rituals and the use of "tradition."⁴³ This point will be elaborated in the subsequent chapters of this work.

Political power which pertains to making and implementing final decisions by a state generally resides in the sovereign authority of a society. "The sovereign authority is attributed absolute and undivided power to make and interpret the laws, direct and appoint public ministers, and determine the parameters of the subject's freedom of movement."⁴⁴ This is the kind of power with which this dissertation is concerned. In this work, I argue that this was the type of power over which contestation developed between the Swazi monarch, on the one hand, and the Anglo-Boer alliance and later the British, on the other. The making and interpretation of laws in Swaziland, the division of space, and the absolute power over the emaSwati were all matters of debate between the Swazi sovereign and the emerging colonial state. Political power is constituted by the following elements, "economic resources (wealth, skills, productive capacity), coercive power

⁴²Mills, Power, edited by Horowitz, p. 23. Emphasis added.

⁴³For a criticism of this kind of manipulation, see Richard Levin, "Is this the Swazi Way?: State, Democracy and the Land Question," Transformation, 13 (1990), pp. 46-66.

⁴⁴Ingrid Makus, Women, Politics, and Reproduction: The Liberal Legacy (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 44.

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(control of the army and other security forces), control of the public sector, international standing and political legitimacy."⁴⁵

Power bestows privilege upon those who wield it by virtue of their positions in the hierarchy of institutions. In monarchical settings like Swaziland, those closest to the king and queen mother enjoyed the utmost of privileges. The structure of monarchies or of even political institutions in general offers a variety of positions of privileges. One scholar gives the following structure of a monarchy in an African context to demonstrate power and privilege:

at the top of the system there was a small minority of powerful and privileged individuals who, by virtue of royal favor, lived off the surplus produced by others. Beneath them was a more numerous, though still small, class of officials and specialists of various kinds who either catered to the whims and fancies of the governing class or performed the lesser, but often vital tasks of government. Finally, at the bottom were the great majority of common people, who produced the surplus on which the two more privileged classes depended.⁴⁶

The group within a society which wields power, be it political, economic, or military, though for our purposes the focus is on the political power, has been referred to by students of power as the "power elite."⁴⁷

In monarchical settings, kings had massive powers and they (kings) were

⁴⁵Vincent T. Maphai, "The New South Africa: A Season for Power-sharing," Journal of Democracy, 7, 1 (January 1996), 72.

⁴⁶Gerhard E. Lenski, Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), p. 172. (Of course, Lenski does remind us that these classes were further sub-divided into various subclasses. See *ibid.*) For a fuller discussion of the notion of power and privilege in African kingdoms, especially in the Dahomey kingdom, see *ibid.*, chapter 7.

⁴⁷For this phrase and its discussion, see C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite (New York: Oxford University Press, 5th printing, 1963, originally published, 1956), chapter 12.

immensely pivotal points upon which the life of the society revolved. People from humblest backgrounds could rise to positions of influence in power and privilege through appointment to an office by a king. Similarly, kings were capable of breaking other people of wealth and power within their kingdoms. For example, Lenski reminds us that "kings often mutilated, exiled, or killed their own brothers and other close relatives whom they feared might be motivated to attempt a palace revolution."⁴⁸ However, this does not mean that kings employed their power in an arbitrary fashion, for doing so could have resulted in a rebellion from their subjects. In his study of the Dahomey kingdom, Melville Herskovits, points out, "Despite his capriciousness ...the King was not without a realization of the importance of having the whole-hearted support of these men [his officials] whom he had elevated to positions of rank."⁴⁹ This concern limited the power of kings both in Dahomey and in general, "since no monarch or minister could destroy valuable officials without good reason and long remain in power."⁵⁰ We will see in the main discussion of this dissertation the consequences of this to a Swazi king, who was alleged to be involved in the death of one of the senior councillors who served in the Swazi monarchy in 1898.

Other scholars remind us that to be exercised effectively power is usually clothed in its accouterments such as authority, influence and unlegitimized coercion. Skaine provides the following definitions of the accouterments of power: "Authority is the right

⁴⁸Lenski, Power and Privilege, p.168.

⁴⁹Melville Herskovits, Dahomey: An Ancient West African Kingdom (Locust Valley, New York: Augustin, 1938), quoted by Lenski, Power and Privilege, p. 170.

⁵⁰Lenski, Power and Privilege, p. 170.

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given by members of the social system and built into the role to control others. Influence and unlegitimized coercion are unauthoritative. Influence depends on personal characteristics and social capital.”⁵¹ Others remind us that any discourse on power must take into account the notion of force. For example, Bruce Lincoln argues, “force (i.e., the exercise or threat of physical violence)...is regularly employed by those who hold official power to compel obedience and suppress deviance.” He also argues that force is always at the disposal of the ruling elites to employ in their attempt to bring about social change and that such a force was used in colonial conquest.⁵²

R. F. Khan, for his part, informs us, “when we say of someone that he [she] has authority over others, or that he is in authority, we acknowledge his right to give commands, issue orders, or arrive at decisions; and when we challenge someone’s authority in this sense we question his right to do these things.”⁵³ Khan makes a distinction between authority in a Weberian sense from that of the traditional sense. “Traditional authority, on the other hand, employs for its basis traditions, customs and other historical precedents for determining the seat of authority and the area over which it extends.”⁵⁴ This was the type of authority upon which the Swazi monarchy based its

⁵¹Skaine, Power and Gender, p. 65.

⁵²Bruce Lincoln, Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 3. Lincoln discusses the Incwala ceremony in Swaziland within the context of discourse and ideology. See *ibid.*, chapter 4.

⁵³R. F. Khan, “A Note on the Concept of Authority,” in Gehan Wijeyewardene, ed., Leadership and Authority: A Symposium (Singapore: University of Singapore Press, 1968), p. 7.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*

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claim to legitimacy as the absolute power in the precolonial and colonial period with regard to the affairs of Swaziland.

An important point deserves to be made on the concept of power: that power is not always exercised overtly. Some power players exercise power covertly or behind closed doors. I would call some of such persons, "power peddlers," to borrow Howe and Trott's phrase.⁵⁵ Even more, power players usually hold back certain information from their opponents for various reasons including strategic ones. Sometimes power players do not literally mean what they profess in words. At times they say one thing publicly and another privately. This kind of power play has been referred to by scholars of power relations as public and private transcripts.⁵⁶ Thus, an examination of power ought to take into account the various locations of power.⁵⁷ However, this dissertation is not concerned with other types of power outside the political arena.

Power relations are also embedded in the language as a medium of

⁵⁵Russell Warren Howe and Sarah Hays Trott employed the concept of "power peddlers" in their study of how lobbyists influence the US domestic and foreign policies. For a discussion of this concept in its context, see their work, The Power Peddlers: How Lobbyists Mold America's Foreign Policy (New York: Doubleday, 1977). For those who might be interested, Howe and Trott also discuss the connection between lobbying and the European colonization of Africa since the Berlin Conference, 1884-1885, and the US foreign policy towards Africa. See *ibid.* chapter 4.

⁵⁶James C. Scott, Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). See also Paul Griffiths, "Secrecy and Authority in Late Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century London," Historical Journal, 40, 4 (1997), 925-951.

⁵⁷See for example, Sophia Florakas Petsalis, The Silent Power: A Portrait of Nigerian Women (Montreal, Meridian Press, 1990), and Liesa Stam Aurbach, "Women's Domestic Power: A Study of Women's Roles in a Tunisian Town" (Ph.D. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1980).

communication within the political elite, as well as between the dominant and subordinate groups, and for our purpose, between the would be colonizer and the colonized. Recently, Kaniki has drawn our attention to the importance of understanding the context within which certain public statements are usually uttered, especially in power-laden-situations. He points out that some statements are expressed “as sheer rhetoric,” while others are mentioned as an attempt “to be relevant to the occasion,” and even more, some are uttered as an exercise in diplomacy, “saying what [one’s] host and other[s] expected of him to say.”⁵⁸

The significance of language even takes on added importance when one deals with power relations between a political power which was in the process of being colonized and the colonizing power, as this dissertation does. Swaziland was in the process of being colonized by the Anglo-Transvaal alliance from 1890s to 1899, and was colonized by Britain from 1904 to 1968. Therefore, any study of how European colonialism was imposed on Swaziland ought to have an appreciation of the subtleties in the Swazi-Anglo-Transvaal power relations. Recently, several writers have provided us with some insights on the understanding of the colonial powers and their use of language. Robert MacDonald makes the claim that “language is itself a determinant in the perception of reality.” He draws attention to the significance of the “metaphorical

⁵⁸M.H.Y. Kaniki, “The Swazi Monarchy and the Dynamics of Colonialism” (Paper presented at the History Research Seminar at the University of Swaziland, January 22, 1997), p. 1.

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construction of empire.”⁵⁹ Johannes Fabian points out that communication with the colonized by a colonizing power was among the preconditions for establishing regimes of colonial power. He argues, “this went beyond the (trivial) fact of verbal exchanges, because in the long run such exchanges depended on a shared communicative praxis providing the common ground to which unilateral claims could be imposed.”⁶⁰ In his study of how Belgium as a colonial power appropriated the Shaba Swahili in Belgian Congo from 1880 to 1938, Fabian illustrates the way the colonial power controlled the means of communication. Furthermore, there is now an emerging scholarly interest to understand the meaning of royal language and its nuances within African politics. This kind of literature makes a contribution to our understanding of language, power and hegemony as practiced by royalists in Africa.⁶¹ Given the intricate royal communication between the monarchy and the citizens of the country, as well as between the monarchy and the outside world, scholars of the affairs of Swaziland have yet to produce this genre of literature as Yankah has done for Ghana.

A brief comment on the phrase power relation which appears on the subtitle of this dissertation is in order here. Roderick Martin reminds us that, “the major elements in any explanation of power relations are actors’ goals and the distribution of resources

⁵⁹Robert H. MacDonald, The Language of Empire: Myths and Metaphors of Popular Imperialism, 1880-1918 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 3.

⁶⁰Fabian, Language and Colonial Power, p. 3.

⁶¹For a ground-breaking work in this field in African politics, see Kwesi Yankah, Speaking for the Chief: Okyeame and the Politics of Akan Royal Oratory (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1995). For a more general analysis of the role of language in relations of domination and subordination, see Scott, Domination, chapter one.

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required to achieve them."⁶² This work employs the concept power relations in this sense. It attempts to examine the goals of the actors such as the Swazi monarchy under the direction of Labotsibeni, the Transvaal and the British governments over the affairs in Swaziland. In this sense, I argue that these actors attempted to get the best out of a negotiated colonial encounter, that is, the Anglo-Transvaal governments imposing a colonial situation in Swaziland, and the Swazi monarchy trying as best as it could to retain its dominant position over its precolonial constituency, the Swazi society. This means that, first, once the Swazi monarchy had realized that it could no longer avoid an establishment of European colonialism in Swaziland, it then opted for a British colonial power rather than that of the Transvaal government. Second, one of the Swazi monarchy's goals seems to have been its concern to retain its precolonial privileged position as a power elite over the emaSwati in the face of the Anglo-Transvaal governments' attempts to place Swaziland under a European power in the shape of the Transvaal government. This goal has, at least, been observed by John Daniel in his study of Swaziland and South Africa's regional strategy of destabilization in the 1980s. My work takes into account a thesis advanced by Daniel where he challenges a component of dependency theory, "the concept of imperialist hegemony - which suggests that all phenomena of significance in th [sic] African political economy are the products of omnipotent external forces and that local class forces are irrelevant." Instead, Daniel has focused his analysis on the "structure and class character of the Swazi state."⁶³ I argue

⁶²Roderick Martin, The sociology of power (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 50.

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that the Swazi power elite in the shape of the monarchy was mainly concerned with securing its dominant position over the Swazi society throughout its interaction with the colonial powers: the Transvaal Boers and the British.

Martin points out that “a comprehensive theory of power relations would specify the variables relevant to understand each stage of the process, the reasons for their variation, and the ultimate consequences of such variations for power relations.”⁶³

However, I do not present such a theory here, but such a comprehensive theory emerges in the main discussion of this work. To be sure, power relations as discussed in this work were asymmetrical and complex. They fall within the genre which has been observed by Martin, when he pointed out that, “power relations are based directly upon two elements, asymmetric dependence and the difficulties of escape.”⁶⁴ With the advent of a European power, in the shape of the Boers who established their republic in the Transvaal in the 1840s and 1850s, and the British in the 1870s, the Swazi monarchy had established an uneasy dependence on these powers for the stability of its power both in Swaziland and in the region. Thus, from the 1880s onward the Swazi monarchy was in real terms in a kind of power relations noted by Martin of being “asymmetric dependence,” which was characterized by “the difficulties of escape.” However, unlike in a typical dependency theory setting, by adopting an accommodation stance in its dealings with the British colonial power, the Swazi monarchy had struck a mutually beneficial relationship, which allowed the colonial power to engage in its accumulation of capital while ensuring “the

⁶³Martin, Power, p. 51.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p. 56.

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political survival and modest prosperity of the local royalists.”⁶⁵

Historiography of Women in Africa

This study is concerned primarily with the history of royal women in the politics of Swaziland. Therefore, it limits its review of literature on women and power to the category of women in royal circles in Africa during the precolonial and colonial periods. Such women were variously referred to as queens, queen-mothers, and queen-regents. However, I am aware of the vast and fast-growing literature on women, politics and economics in colonial and postcolonial Africa. There are also numerous works which provide a review of literature of African women's history or women in history and women's studies.⁶⁶ Therefore, in this chapter I make no effort to reproduce such a

⁶⁵Daniel, Swaziland, p. 4.

⁶⁶See for example, Filomina Chioma Steady, Female Power in African Politics: The National Congress of Sierra Leone (California Institute of Technology, 1975). Hay provides an insightful essay on works which emphasize the role of the average woman in Africa. See Margaret Jean hay, “Queens, Prostitutes and Peasants: Historical Perspectives on African Women, 1971-1986” (Boston University: African Studies Center Working Papers, No. 130, 1988), pp. 1-17. See also Beverly Grier, “Pawns, Porters, and Petty Traders: Women in the Transition to Cash Crop Agriculture in Colonial Ghana,” Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 17, 2 (1992), 304-328. Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society has devoted its 1991 issue to an exploration of women in history in Africa. For example, see Judith Carney and Michael Watts, “Disciplining Women? Rice, Mechanization, and the Evolution of Mandinka Gender Relations in Senegambia,” Signs, 16, 4 (1991), 651-681; Kristin Mann, “Women, Landed Property, and the Accumulation of Wealth in Early Colonial Lagos,” Signs, 16, 4 (1991), 682-706; Elizabeth A. Eldredge, “Women in Production: The Economic Role of Women in Nineteenth-Century Lesotho,” Signs, 16, 4 (1991), 707-731, and Elizabeth Schmidt, “Patriarchy, Capitalism, and the Colonial State in Zimbabwe,” Signs, 16, 4 (1991), 732-756. For a discussion of a broader conceptualization of the history of women in Africa and elsewhere, see Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Margaret Strobel, “Conceptualizing the History of Women in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle

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There are few scholars, such as David Sweetman, who write specifically on women leaders in African history. However, Sweetman's work is not comprehensive in its scope and choice of the range of women leaders in African history. He is aware of this limitation, for he states, "those chosen in no way make a definitive list of significant African women leaders."⁶⁷ Apart from the point that women such as Labotsibeni are not included in Sweetman's work, his study is based solely on few secondary sources, which do not even concern themselves primarily with women in history. Thus, Sweetman's work only provides glimpses of the contributions of its subjects to their societies and to the making of African history. Sweetman's particular agenda compromises his ability to conduct rigorous research on his subjects. For instance, Sweetman states, "my hope is to create interest among young people in the lives of some of Africa's outstanding female personalities and I have intentionally erred on the side of the positive."⁶⁸

Gender refers to roles assigned by society to people because of their sex, that is, men and women. Gender analysis is the process to study how society uses sex or gender classifications to allocate responsibilities. This dissertation employs the concept of gender only in the context of royal women, for these were women who were not only located at the center of Swazi politics, but who shaped and influenced both the nature of

East," Journal of Women's History, 1, 1 (Spring 1989), 31-62.

⁶⁷David Sweetman, Women Leaders in African History (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1984), p. ix.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*

politics and kingly successions in precolonial; colonial; and postcolonial Swaziland. In a real sense, they were the power peddlers.

In the history of queen-mothers in Africa, the position of a queen-mother (*ndlovukati*) in Swaziland compares favorably with that of the queen-mother (*Ohemaa*) in precolonial Asante kingdom. In the case of Swaziland the position of the *indlovukati* was always occupied by either the mother of a king (*ngwenyama*), a sister of a queen-mother or one of the wives of a deceased king, who became a fictitious mother of the king. This practice contrasts with the position of *Ohemaa*, who could be a mother or the classificatory sister of the king (*Ohene*). Thus some anthropologists have traditionally compared the position of the queen-mothers in these two countries in precolonial times.⁶⁹ The main difference between the Asante and the Swazi societies with regard to the position of women in these societies was that the former was matrilineal, and whereas the latter was patrilineal.⁷⁰ Therefore a study of queen mothers in these two societies ought to take into account this difference, for it influences the distribution of power within each

⁶⁹For example, see Annie M.D. Lebeuf, "The Role of Women in the Political Organization of African Societies," in Denise Pauline, ed. (translated by H.M. Wright), Women of Tropical Africa (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2nd edition 1974, first published in 1960), pp. 93-119. In this chapter Lebeuf provides an overview discussion of women in precolonial and colonial political organizations in sub-Saharan Africa.

⁷⁰For a good treatment of the implication of matrilineal arrangement in a society, especially with regard to inheritance and marriage, see Gaspard Dery, Inheritance and Marriage Among the Dagaaba of Northern Ghana (Legon: University of Ghana, 1987). There is a fast growing body of literature which deals with the concept patriarchy in history. A brief review of some of the major works on patriarchy and the definition of this concept as used in this dissertation is found below in chapter two.

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society, especially between the sexes, i.e., men and women.

Anthropologists are still concerned with the study of queens and queen mothers in power in Africa. To date their findings on this subject are contained in a collection of essays in an edited volume.⁷¹ Although the essays in this volume make a scholarly contribution to our knowledge with regard to the intersection of gender and power, they do not mark a break from the traditional methodology of anthropologists. Therefore, they still leave a room for historians to apply a historical analysis in the study of the same subjects: queens and queen mothers in political power.

Recently the subject of queen mothers in politics has attracted historians' attention as well. Filomina C. Steady has examined the role of the Asante queen mothers in government and politics. She observed that these women were energetic and capable individuals with strong characters. Second, that their success in politics was influenced by historical circumstances and political contexts.⁷² For instance, Steady argues that "the queen mother as a political actor was grossly outnumbered by men. She was most effective in politics and government when she was free from ritual constraints and there

⁷¹See Flora Edouwaye S. Kaplan, ed., Queens, Queen Mothers, Priestesses, and Power: Case Studies in African Gender, Volume 810 (New York: The New York Academy of Sciences, 1997).

⁷²Filomina Chioma Steady, "Asante Queen Mothers in Government and Politics in the Nineteenth Century," in Filomina Chioma Steady, ed., The Black Woman Cross-Culturally (Rochester, Vermont: Schenkman, 1985 edition, first published in 1981), p. 76. The Asante queen mothers have received scholarly attention as compared to those of Swaziland. See for example another work on queen mothers in Asante, Beverly J. Stoeltje, "Asante Queen Mothers: A Study in Female Authority," in Kaplan, ed., Queens, pp. 41-71.

was no available or effective male leadership."⁷³ Steady further argues that the involvement of the queen mothers in government and politics ought not be construed as an indication of women's participation in politics. This is so because "their political goals were defined and generalized from concrete lineage or family interests. Their political fields were the arenas of lineage and state and they drew their support not from 'female power' but from all effective sections of Asante society."⁷⁴ Steady's observations of the role of queen mothers in the nineteenth-century Asante society speak also to the position of queen mothers and queen regents in Swaziland.

T.C. McCaskie, for his part, has explored power, ideology and differentiation in precolonial Asante state. He reminds us that "accumulation of women was inextricably bound up with the economics of power."⁷⁵ He argues that marriage and adultery were outward manifestations of power, ideology and differentiation in Asante history. Thus, it was generally accepted by the Asante that no one should accumulate more wives than the Asantehene. Therefore, state and society in precolonial Asante were organized in similar fashion as was in precolonial Swaziland. In both states, women were an index of power and social status.

Nakanyike B. Musisi has brought a new perspective to the study of polygynous marriage in precolonial Africa, in her work on precolonial Buganda kingdom. She observes that polygynous marriages ought to be viewed as strategies by the political elite

⁷³Steady, "Asante Queen Mothers," p. 76.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

⁷⁵McCaskie, "State and Society," *JAH*, 22 (1981), 488.

to control economic, political and social aspects of the state machinery. She traces the practice of “elite polygyny” to the historical process of class and state formation. She concludes that “‘elite polygyny’ thus must be understood in relation to the emergence, consolidation, and expansion of the Buganda state with the concomitant development of social inequality.”⁷⁶ Musisi's work sheds light to my work, especially in my discussion of the development of patriarchy in precolonial Swaziland. Recently, Musisi has followed her earlier works with a biographical study of one of Buganda's queen mothers. In this work Musisi demonstrated that royal women had, indeed, shaped and influenced kingship. By so doing, she draws attention to the importance of understanding gender relations with a state. She argues that some of the royal women like queen mother Namaganda had challenged the notions of a certain kind of behavior which were imposed by the state on the institution of queen mother.⁷⁷ This is an important observation, for it reveals that the construction of power relations in a monarchy and a state involved gender contestations. This is significant for it departs from observations by anthropologists who have tended to see harmonious relations within the components of the monarchy.

More recently the study of gender, politics and culture in precolonial and colonial Africa has received a further scholarly attention. Edna G. Bay examines these phenomena in the Kingdom of Dahomey between c. 1790 and 1984. Bay makes a claim

⁷⁶Nakanyike B. Musisi, “Women, ‘Elite Polygyny,’ And Buganda State Formation,” Signs, 16, 4 (1991), 759.

⁷⁷See Nakanyike B. Musisi, “A Personal Journey Into Custom, Identity, Power, and Politics: Researching and Writing the Life and Times of Buganda's Queen Mother Irene Drusila Namaganda (1896-1957),” History in Africa, 23 (1996), 369-385.

that her work “reveals patterns of the intersection of gender, kinship, and class that highlight how power and authority were gained, were exercised, and were lost over the life of the kingdom.”⁷⁸ She portrays women as actors among the ruling elite in the kingdom of Dahomey. She challenges a male-centered account (in the shape of a king) of the history of precolonial kingdom. Instead, she argues that “power in the Dahomey was diffuse and multifaceted, and was exercised by coalitions of individuals whose membership changed over time.”⁷⁹

Although my focus is on royal women in the politics of Swaziland, I am aware of other important scholarly findings and theoretical advances to the position of women in African history. For example, in her study of Shona women, Elizabeth Schmidt calls attention to the significance of studying households dynamics which shape the larger social structures and relations. She reminds us that an understanding of gender relations within the household is critical for our knowledge of the society. She perceives the household as a ‘terrain of struggle’ over how to organize and construct the structure of a society and the roles of individuals within it. She asserts, “unless we understand the interrelations between women and men, we cannot fully understand the structure of a given society, its history, political and economic systems, or ideology.” To emphasize the importance of studying the household, Schmidt further argues, “an analysis of a given society over time that neglects the arena of domestic struggle, the lives of women, and

⁷⁸Edna G. Bay, Wives of the Leopard: Gender, Politics, and Culture in the Kingdom of Dahomey (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998), p. 5.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, p. 7.

their critical contribution to production and biological and social reproduction misconceives the society as a whole and presents a distorted view of the entire historical process."⁸⁰ Schmidt's observations are valid and are as yet to be followed up by scholars of Swazi history. However, they still inform the present work, though it deals with a very small pool of women in Swaziland. One of her major contribution to the history which incorporates women is the extension of the boundaries of this kind of history. By so doing, Schmidt opens wider the field of history which focuses on women and men in society.

The inclusion of the study of women in Africa has indeed brought about the broadening of the some of the concepts which have been associated exclusively with men. For example, in her study of the role of the Kikuyu women in Mau Mau rebellion and social change in Kenya, Cora Ann Presley has demonstrated that during anti-colonial struggles Kikuyu women's nationalism forced male Kikuyu Central Association leaders to accept their political aspirations. Kikuyu women were involved in all facets of anti-colonial struggles. They independently organized labor protests, composed abusive songs against European settlers, planned and administered new schools with special facility for girls, and enlisted as soldiers in the Mau Mau. Presley argues that the involvement of the Kikuyu women in anti-colonial struggles paved way for their inclusion in politics and armed forces in postcolonial Kenya. Her study has shown that

⁸⁰For all these references to Schmidt, see Elizabeth Schmidt, Peasants, Traders, and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939 (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1992), p. 1.

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women were not political inactive in anti-colonial struggles and that anti-colonial nationalism was not restricted to men, but included women as well.⁸¹ By presenting such an argument, Presley has broadened our scholarly understanding of the concept of nationalism to include women, instead of restricting it to men. This observation is equally valid in the case of queen mothers and queen regents of Swaziland who resisted European colonialism.

Todate E. Jensen Krige and J.D. Krige's work is the only comprehensive study of the role of a queen in a society in South African historiography. Krige and Krige have examined the role of Mujaji, who is known for possessing the knowledge to make rain, in nineteenth-century Lovedu society in northern Transvaal.⁸² However, Krige and Krige's work is not situated within the colonial context. Even more, given the recent historiographical advances in the study of women and the South African history, Krige and Krige's approach in their study of Mujaji is now largely dated. It would be interesting to know how the current generation of scholars would view Mujaji's role and influence in the Lovedu society of the nineteenth-century.

⁸¹Cora Ann Presley, Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion, and Social Change in Kenya (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1992). Mau Mau was the anti-colonial armed struggle waged by Kenyans against the British settler colonial state in Kenya, and its armed struggle culminated in Kenya becoming independent in December 1963.

⁸²See E. Jensen Krige and J.D. Krige, The Realm Of A Rain-Queen: A Study of the Pattern of Lovedu Society (New York: Oxford University Press, first pub. 1943, and reprinted 1947).

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Historiography of Swaziland

The historiography of Swaziland has grown considerably since the days of Noel George Garson's work which has become a point of departure for many historians of the history of Swaziland. Although Garson's work has received criticisms from other scholars, it has also made a scholarly contribution by generating an interest in the study of the history of Swaziland, instead of merely perceiving Swaziland as a pawn in the Anglo-Transvaal rivalry in the latter's attempt to get access to the Portuguese's Delagoa Bay of Lourenço Marques (present-day Mozambique) through Swaziland.⁸³ Garson has examined Swaziland as an area of Anglo-Transvaal conflict. In this way, Swaziland featured in his work as a pawn in the British and Transvaal Boer rivalry in southern Africa.

Besides Garson's work, which was for all intents and purposes a history of the Anglo-Transvaal rivalry in Swaziland, the academic history of Swaziland has its foundation, as was the case elsewhere in Africa in the works of a social anthropologist, Hilda Kuper. Kuper did her anthropological fieldwork in Swaziland in the 1930s. The

⁸³Noel George Garson, "The Swaziland Question and A Road to the Sea" (M.A. Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand), in *Archives Year Book for South African History*, Vol. II (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1957). For works which have criticized and used Noel's work as their point of departure, see Francis Mashasha, "The Road to Colonialism: Concessions and the Collapse of Swazi Independence" (D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford, 1977), Philip Bonner, *Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires: The evolution and dissolution of the nineteenth-century Swazi state* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983); Manelisi Genge, "Law and the Imposition of Colonial Rule in Swaziland" (M.A. thesis, Ohio University, Athens, 1992).

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results of her early research in Swaziland appears in her three books.⁸⁴ Kuper has analyzed the formation of rank based on birth among the emaSwati with the Dlamini aristocracy at the top of the Swazi society (that is, class structure among the emaSwati); the conquest of the indigenous peoples in present-day Swaziland by the Dlamini clan from an area that is, in the present-day Mozambique towards the end of the eighteenth-century; the coming of the European concessionary era in Swaziland; and the coming of missionaries.⁸⁵ She also examined the relations between the emaSwati and the Europeans in colonial Swaziland.⁸⁶ Among her legacies in the historiography of Swaziland are such phrases as the "African aristocracy," and "paper conquest."⁸⁷

However, Kuper has always taken the Swazi monarchy as her point of departure in all her works on Swaziland. She was primarily concerned with the study of the monarchy, especially its male line, that is, the kings and their relations with both their subjects and the Europeans.⁸⁸ She also examined the instruments by which the monarchy extended its hegemony over its subjects. These instruments included such subjects as the

⁸⁴Hilda Kuper, An African Aristocracy: Rank Among the Swazi (London: Oxford University Press, 1947, reprinted in 1961 and 1965); Hilda Kuper, The Uniform of Colour: A Study of White-Black Relationships in Swaziland (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1947, and reprinted by New York: Negro University Press, 1969), and Hilda Kuper, The Swazi: A South African Kingdom (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963).

⁸⁵See Kuper, Aristocracy.

⁸⁶See Kuper, Uniform of Colour.

⁸⁷See Kuper, Aristocracy and The Swazi.

⁸⁸See Hild Kuper, Sobhuza II, Ngwenyama and King of Swaziland: The story of an hereditary ruler and his country (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1978). Recently, Kaniki, a historian of the history of Swaziland, has referred to this book as an "essentially a massive praise-song." Kaniki, "Monarchy," p. 16.

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military, and royal rituals.⁸⁹ She studied women only with regards to their roles in the rise of kings and in connecting together the aristocracy. In spite of the critical importance of an outstanding queen mother and queen regent like Labotsibeni, Kuper still overlooked her and instead concerned herself with the life of King Sobhuza II. In acknowledging the central role of Labotsibeni in the history of Swaziland, Kuper wrote, the “events of her early life are among the essentials of Sobhuza’s story.”⁹⁰ With this single statement she buried from the historical record Labotsibeni’s outstanding record as the head of the Swazi state from 1890 to 1921. Thus, despite Kuper’s prolific work on Swaziland, there still exists an important gap in the history of Swaziland regarding the role of queen mothers in Swazi politics. Through the study of the era of Queen Regent Labotsibeni, this dissertation attempts to address this scholarly gap in the historiography of Swaziland.

Scholars of the history of Swaziland have since further developed some of the themes which appear in Kuper’s works. For example, the theme of European concessions in Swaziland, or what Kuper has referred to as the “paper conquest,” has been examined by various scholars.⁹¹ Philip Bonner has further explored the existence of class structure

⁸⁹Hilda Kuper, “The Monarchy and the Military in Swaziland,” in John Argyle and Eleanor Preston-Whyte, eds., Social System and Tradition in Southern Africa (Cape Town: Oxford University press, 1978), pp. 222-239, and Hilda Kuper, “A Ritual of Kingship Among the Swazi,” Africa 14 (1944), 230-256. See also T.O. Beidelman, “Swazi Royal Rituals,” Africa, 36 (1966), 373-405. For a recent appraisal of how scholars have dealt with the Swazi rituals, especially the one known as the Incwala, see Bruce Lincoln, Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), chapter 4.

⁹⁰Kuper, Sobhuza II, p. 18.

⁹¹A.N. Boyce, “The Swaziland Concessions and their Political Consequences, 1876-1908” (M.A. thesis, University of South Africa - Unisa- , 1947). Balam Nyeko mentions that Boyce’s thesis is reported by Unisa as lost, see Nyeko, “Pre-Nationalist Resistance to

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in precolonial Swazi society, an aspect which Kuper had earlier observed in the Swazi society when she coined her phrase of "African aristocracy." Bonner was also influenced by B. Hindess and P.Q. Hirst's notion of the modes of production in studying precapitalist societies.⁹² However, an important observation on the class structure of the Swazi society which is missing in both Kuper's and Bonner's works ought to be made here. The Dlamini clan, apart from the larger category of ruling aristocracy, enjoyed a specially privileged class status by virtue of its association with the line of descent of the Swazi kings. They constituted the core of the nobility in the Swazi class structure. One scholar has observed elsewhere in Africa (Dahomey kingdom) that "rank usually varied directly with the recency of the reign of one's kin, with those related to the current monarch enjoying the highest status."⁹³ This remark speaks also to the situation of the relatives of the Swazi monarch. Bonner's major contribution to the historiography of Swaziland is his work on precolonial Swaziland. He has traced the formation of the Swazi state in the late eighteenth-century and the relations of the state with its neighbors.⁹⁴ Thus, in their

Colonial Rule: Swaziland on the Eve of the Imposition of British Administration, 1890-1902," A paper presented at the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland History Workshop, Gaborone, Botswana, September 3-8, 1973, p. 17, note no. 22; F. Mashasha, "The Road to Colonialism: Concessions and the Collapse of Swazi Independence, 1875-1926 (D. Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1977), and Philip Bonner, *Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires: The evolution and dissolution of the nineteenth-century Swazi state* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983).

⁹²See Philip Bonner, "Classes, the mode of production and the state in pre-colonial Swaziland," in Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore, eds., *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa* (London: Longman, 1980), pp. 80-101.

⁹³Gerhard E. Lenski, *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification* (New York: McGraw, 1966), p. 170.

⁹⁴See Philip Bonner, "Early State Formation among the Nguni: The Relevance of the Swazi Case" (Unpublished African Seminar Paper, University of London, School of

sum, Bonner's works deal with the history of precolonial Swaziland. However, like his predecessor Kuper, Bonner does not make any of the Swazi queen mothers or queen regents a focus of his study. Instead, he concerns himself with the rule of kings, and only remarks in passing that queen mothers and queen regents, especially Queen Regent Tsandzile, were significant players in Swazi politics in particular during the minority of a king in pre-colonial Swaziland.⁹⁵ Likewise with Kuper, Bonner's view of the history of Swaziland centers around the Dlamini royal power. But unlike Kuper, he perceives the Dlamini power to have disintegrated by 1889.⁹⁶ However, if the Dlamini power had indeed disintegrated in 1889, it did not completely collapse, for it has continued to be at the center stage of the Swazi monarchy to this day. Thus, probably one could argue that Bonner had prematurely announced the disintegration of the Dlamini power. Any real decline of the Dlamini power began in 1898 with the ascendancy of the European power in the shape of the Anglo-Transvaal alliance,⁹⁷ and not in 1889, the date at which

Oriental and African Studies, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, January 1978), pp. 1-16. (Copy of this paper is available in the Special Collection, Library, University of Swaziland.), P.L. Bonner, "Mswati II," in Christopher Saunders, ed., Black Leaders in Southern African History (London: Heinemann, 1979), pp. 61-74, Philip Bonner, "Swazi Relations with their Neighbours, 1840-81" (Paper for discussion on 6th November 1968 in African History Seminar, University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, Institute of Commonwealth Studies), pp. 1-9. (Copy of this paper is available in the special Collection, Library, University of Swaziland.), and Philip Bonner, "Factions and Fissions: Transvaal/Swazi Politics in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," Journal of African History, XIX, 2 (1978), 219-238. Some of these papers were incorporated in Bonner, Kings.

⁹⁵Bonner, Kings, p.192.

⁹⁶P.L. Bonner, "The Rise, Consolidation and Disintegration of Dlamini Power in Swaziland: A Study in the Relationship of Foreign Affairs to Internal Political Development" (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1977).

⁹⁷See Genge, "Law," chapter five.

Bonner's work stops. And more importantly for the purpose of this work, Bonner's works stop before Labotsibeni's era in Swazi politics. Labotsibeni, more than any other queen mother or queen regent in Swaziland, represents a critical case study for the study of the role of queen mothers or queen regents in Swazi politics, and remains largely a little known figure among scholars.

There are still further attempts to write a precolonial history of Swaziland.

Carolyn Hamilton and Michael Westcott have produced what appears to me as an attempt to popularize history. (Of course, there is nothing intrinsically wrong about popularizing history, as long as one recognizes that it is just a popular history, and nothing more.) The layout, many pictures and sketches convey to the reader the popular view in this book.

This work is based exclusively on oral interviews which were conducted in Swaziland by the Oral History Project. Westcott and Hamilton point out that "documented evidence is primarily the work of white settlers and reflects their point of view and their ideas about the time when they were living in Swaziland."⁹⁸ Thus, they argue, the precolonial history of Swaziland is contained in the oral traditions of its people. To write a book based exclusively on oral evidence is to go against the grain, for even the pioneer advocates of the significance of oral evidence in the writing of African history, such as Jan Vansina and others, use both oral and written evidence in the reconstruction of the precolonial

⁹⁸Carolyn Hamilton, ed. (compiled by Michael Westcott for the Swaziland Oral History Project), In the Tracks of the Swazi Past: A Historical Tour of the Ngwane and Ndwandwe kingdoms (Manzini, Swaziland: Macmillan Boleswa, 1992), 87-88. This book might be useful to tourists.

African history.⁹⁹ Therefore, Hamilton and Westcott sacrifice substance in their book by completely neglecting documented evidence in their attempt to reconstruct Swaziland's precolonial history. Their justification to ignore such a body of evidence has worked against producing an informative scholarly piece of work. Like the other earlier works on precolonial history of Swaziland, the stories of this book are organized around the Swazi kings. The role of women in politics in precolonial Swaziland is neglected. Yet, the institution of queen mother in Swazi politics had existed in precolonial times.

So far, J.S.M. Matsebula is the only historian who has examined a general history of Swaziland from pre-colonial to the post-colonial era. He employs Swazi tradition as his conceptual tool. However, Matsebula's work suffers from a lack of contexts from which to situate the events he examines. His work is not informed by broader theoretical considerations and his analysis is narrowly conceived. Therefore, his work is too self-contained to satisfy a historian's desire for both the broader and narrower contexts within which to situate one's narrative. Like the others who preceded his writings, for example, Kuper and others, Matsebula places the Swazi monarchy at the center of his analysis. Likewise, he is mainly concerned with the history of the Swazi kings at the expense of that of the queen mothers and queen regents. For example, he devotes considerable space to the era of King Bhunu or Ngwane V from 1890 to 1899, but he confined his discussion

⁹⁹For example, among Vansina's numerous publications, see Jan Vansina, Paths in the Rainforests: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990). See also Elizabeth Tonkin, Narrating Our Pasts: The social construction of oral history (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992, paperback edition, 1995).

on Labotsibeni's regency to a mere space of five pages.¹⁰⁰ Here, more than in any other work on the history of Swaziland, one observes a gross neglect of one of the rulers who sat on the Swazi throne longer than most Swazi rulers, second only to King Sobhuza II (who effectively stayed on the throne from 1921 until his death in 1982). Matsebula devotes twenty three pages to Bhunu's reign, and yet Bhunu was only a king in name, because throughout his reign he resigned the affairs of the state to Labotsibeni and the councillors who constituted the corporate polity of the monarchy.¹⁰¹ The controversy over Bhunu provided the Anglo-Transvaal governments with an excuse to appropriate some of the judicial powers of the Swazi monarchy.¹⁰² Furthermore, Matsebula's preoccupation with the rule of kings in Swaziland led to his failure to notice that the Swazi monarchy from 1890 to 1899 was held together by Labotsibeni's political astuteness, and not that of Bhunu. Bhunu was a king in name only. Thus, in giving so much attention to King Ngwane V (Bhunu), Matsebula has failed to observe that at times the balance of power between the king and the queen mother hinged on the strength of their characters. On occasions when the king had a stronger character, he would dominate the throne, but at certain times when the queen mother's character was stronger,

¹⁰⁰See J.S.M. Matsebula, A History of Swaziland (Cape Town: Longman, 1972, and 3rd edition 1987), chapters 10 and 11 respectively.

¹⁰¹Bhunu's mark on the affairs of the monarchy was his alleged involvement in what turned out to be the famous murder of Mhlabha Nsibandze, the *indvunankhuluyesive*, who was also an *indvuna* of Labotsibeni on the ninth of April 1898; Bhunu's flight to the British authorities in Natal for political asylum following his alleged involvement in the death of Nsibandze and the Transvaal government's attempt to prosecute him; and his alleged indulgence in alcohol and hunting activities.

¹⁰²Jones, Register, pp. 401 and 462.

she would command the monarchy. Consequently, the era of Ngwane V and Labotsibeni's leadership provides an example of a situation during which the queen mother dominated the throne owing to her strength of character relative to the king.¹⁰³ Matsebula's brief overview of Labotsibeni's era could be partially explained as a reflection of the scholarly interests at the time of his writing, that is, a gross neglect of women's contribution to the making of history. He wrote during the time of the "big man" theory. With the restoration of women to the historical account, Labotsibeni merits some consideration in the history of Swaziland. Matsebula was in all accounts a royalist historian in the wider sense of the word. He viewed the history of Swaziland from a royalist perspective and was too pro- royalist.¹⁰⁴ Even more troubling for me is what has been recently observed by other critical scholars of Swazi history that "significantly Matsebula's work with its misleading contradictions, has been the most easily accessible source of Swazi history in Southern Africa."¹⁰⁵ Therefore Matsebula's version of Swazi history, doubtful as it is, continues to be used as a scholarly work by scholars and the public. However, notwithstanding its pro-royalist view, I was informed by a reliable source when I was in the field in 1996 that the King Sobhuza II had given a directive for one of Matsebula books to be withdrawn from the bookshops, for Sobhuza perceived it as

¹⁰³See Balam Nyeko, "The Rule of the Dlamini in Nineteenth-Century Swaziland," p. 44 (A copy of this paper is available in the Special Collection, Library, University of Swaziland).

¹⁰⁴See, for example, J.S.M. Matsebula, The King's Eye (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1983), and J.S.M. Matsebula, A Tribute to the late His Majesty King Sobhuza II (Mbabane: Webster, 1983).

¹⁰⁵Kaniki, "Colonialism," p.17.

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containing gross irregularities on the history of Swaziland.¹⁰⁶

The history of European colonialism in Swaziland has received a considerably scholarly attention. But, the political history of the country during the colonial period has attracted very little attention from scholars. Francis Mashasha has approached the history of the colonization of Swaziland by using the concessionary era as the vantage point from which he explored the events leading to the loss of the Swazi independence to the Transvaal and the British, respectively. At the center of the concessionary era is the issue of land alienation from the emaSwati to the Europeans.¹⁰⁷ Thus, he followed the agenda which was already established by Hilda Kuper in her notion of the “paper conquest.”

Besides the obvious results of concessions in Swaziland, i.e., the coming of Europeans to the country, the loss of Swazi independence and the land, there was another significant consequence to the Swazi politics. It was that the concessions brought about the direct involvement of Europeans and the western educated Africans from South Africa in the main corporate polity of the Swazi monarchy. Robin W.F. Droogleever has examined the role of one of these Europeans, Theophilus Shepstone Jr, who was brought to Swaziland by King Mbandzeni to assist him to deal with European concessionaires. Shepstone's official position was the 'Resident Advisor and Agent' to the Swazi monarchy in the period 1887 to 1895. Droogleever argues that there is a strong probability that Shepstone was instrumental in mortgaging the future of Swaziland to the

¹⁰⁶Matsebula's book I am referring to here is his History of Swaziland. I will keep the name of my informant confidential for obvious reasons.

¹⁰⁷See Mashasha, “The Road to Colonialism.”

Transvaal Republic in the shape of a 'protectorate' of the Transvaal. He points out that the Transvaal government had reimbursed Shepstone for his services to them. Thus in Droogleever's view, Shepstone "had sacrificed his pride, his honour and his independence of action for money which, ironically, would, he hoped, have realised these same ideals." Consequently, Droogleever concludes that if Shepstone "had not become an agent of the Transvaal, Offy [as Shepstone was commonly known among the concessionaires] might well have acquired as great a reputation in Swaziland as his father had achieved in Natal."¹⁰⁸

B.H.L. Nyeko, for his part, has explored the influence of both Africans from South Africa and European advisors on the Swazi rulers in the early colonial period. He claims that there was "a fundamental misunderstanding between these so-called advisers and their employers. There seemed to be no mutual agreement on what exactly was to be their role. A number of them wished to be granted a carte-blanche - a situation the Swazi rulers could hardly have countenanced."¹⁰⁹ He concludes that "the use of white advisers probably hindered Swazi success against the British even where the Swazi were clearly in the right. The educated Africans had a clear grasp of the situation, but as elsewhere in colonial Africa, the colonial authorities set their faces against them, justifying their stand

¹⁰⁸For both quotes, see Robin William Fortuyn Droogleever, "The Role of Offy Shepstone in Swaziland, 1886-1895" (M.A. thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1976), p. 263.

¹⁰⁹B.H.L. Nyeko, "The Influence of Foreign Advisers and Educated Africans Upon the Swazi Rulers in the Early Colonial Period" (unpublished paper, located in the Special Collection, University of Swaziland Library, n.d.), p.19.

with the flimsiest excuse available."¹¹⁰ In spite of the colonial authorities' ignoring of the opinions of the educated African advisors, Nyeko expressed reservations on the ability of some of the African advisors like Pixley ka Isaka Seme to bring about a popular participation by the emaSwati in the politics of resistance. He perceives Seme to have been a reactionary and a believer in the constitutional procedures, features which he had demonstrated in his activities and capacity as one of the founders and treasurer-general of the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa from 1909 onward.¹¹¹ Indeed, Nyeko's view of Seme has been recently corroborated by another historian Christopher Saunders, who claims that Seme believed in the "value of conservatism and tradition, and of respect for authority, especially hereditary authority."¹¹² The non-Swazi advisors discussed by scholars above are an important factor in this dissertation, for they influenced the direction and nature of Swazi-British power relations. Their presence in Swaziland also gave the Swazi politics a different twist, a belief in the politics of negotiation and a confinement of political activities to the precolonial Swazi monarchy with the exclusion of the masses, compared to other colonial politics southern Africa.

Balam Nyeko took an opposite side from emphasizing the rule of kings in Swaziland, by recognizing the collective nature of what constituted the monarchy. He focused his attention on the land question, colonial taxation, Swaziland's relations with

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 19-20

¹¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹¹²Christopher Saunders, "Pixley Seme: Towards a Biography," South African Historical Journal, 25 (1991), 202. This is Saunders' review article of Richard Rive and Tim Couzens, Seme: The Founder of the ANC (Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1991), and for this whole review, see *ibid.*, 196-217.

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the Transvaal and later the Union of South Africa, and the Swazi authorities relations with the British colonial administrators. Colonial rule is at the center of Nyeko's analysis and he portrays the Swazi leadership as responding to it.¹¹³ However, by lumping together Swazi leaders into a single undifferentiated whole, he fails to recognize two important aspects in the Swazi leadership: the role and character of individuals in politics, and Labotsibeni's leadership position in the Swazi monarchy. Scholars who are concerned with the role of women in history would find it difficult to delineate with clarity the role of Labotsibeni in the history of Swaziland within the period, with which Nyeko deals. Thus Nyeko's work leaves us with an inadequate account of the place of Labotsibeni in the history of Swaziland. Therefore, it is this scholarly gap, which I attempt to address in this dissertation. A minor point, though worth noting, the title of Nyeko's dissertation is a bit misleading, for it gives an impression that this work deals with the events of Swaziland beginning from 1902 to 1930. Yet, Nyeko provides an insightful chapter on precolonial political history of Swaziland. Scholars looking for this kind of information might overlook Nyeko's dissertation, because of the periodization of its title.

Nyeko has, however, made a major contribution to the historiography of Swaziland. He is one of the few historians who have attempted to situate the historiography of Swaziland within the general historiographical trends in African history. Following upon the tradition of scholars such as T.O. Ranger, who sought to

¹¹³See Balam Henry Labeja Nyeko, "The Swazi Leadership's Response to Colonial Rule, 1902-1930" (D. Phil., Makerere University, March 1977).

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trace the African voice in the historiography of colonial Zimbabwe, Nyeko has attempted to incorporate the African voice in his reconstruction of the colonial history of Swaziland. By so doing, he corrected an omission of a Swazi voice especially on a topic that has and still is attracting a scholarly attention: the question of transfer of Swaziland to the Union of South Africa.¹¹⁴ He also later amended the approach he had adopted in his dissertation where he had perceived the Swazi leadership as merely responding to the colonial rule. He redressed this by examining the Swazi leadership's initiatives in its dealings with the British colonialism.¹¹⁵ He has explored an important topic for an understanding of power relations in colonial Swaziland: the influence on Swazi leaders at the beginning of the colonial period of European advisers and educated non-Swazi Africans, who were mainly from the Union of South Africa. He provides a tentative conclusion that "the use of white advisers probably hindered Swazi success against the British even where the Swazi were

¹¹⁴Balam Nyeko, "The African Voice in Colonial Swaziland: The Question of Transfer, 1910-39" (History Staff Seminar paper, The University of Zambia, March 5, 1980), pp. 1-25. For scholars who do not emphasize the African voice on the question of the transfer of Swaziland to the Union of South Africa, see Alan Pim, "The Question of the South African Protectorates," International Affairs, 13, 5 (1934), 668-688; Ronald Hyam, The Failure of South African Expansion, 1908-1948 (London: MacMillan Press, 1972); Alan R. Booth, "Lord Selborne and the British Protectorates, 1908-1910," Journal of African History, X, 1 (1969), 133-148, and for more recently, see David E. Torrance, "Britain, South Africa, and the High Commission Territories: An Old Controversy Revisited," Historical Journal, 41, 3 (1998), 751-772. For an African voice in colonial Zimbabwe, see T.O. Ranger, The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia (London: Heinemann, 1970).

¹¹⁵Balam Nyeko, "African Initiatives and Responses in Colonial Swaziland: The Swazi Leaders and the Land Question, 1902-26" (Paper presented to the International Conference on Southern African History at the National University of Lesotho, Roma, 1st - 7th August, 1977), pp. 2-13.

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clearly in the right."¹¹⁶ Regarding the influence of the educated non-Swazi Africans, Nyeko concludes that they understood the situation well, "but as elsewhere in colonial Africa, the colonial authorities set their faces against them, justifying their stand with the flimsiest excuse available." Nyeko's insights are helpful in shaping the discussion of this work.

More than any other historian of the history of Swaziland, Nyeko has paid attention to both the colonial and precolonial history of the country, especially the history of its leaders. He observed that "the strength of character of the individual kings and their mothers determined their relations with one another," and he cites queen mother Labotsibeni over her son king Ngwane V as a case in point.¹¹⁷ Yet, like other scholars of Swazi history, he adopted a male-centered approach, which focused on the rule of kings in nineteenth-century Swaziland. Thus, he left unattended the history of power relations between *indlovukati* (queen mother) Labotsibeni and King Ngwane V. Similarly, in another paper, Nyeko provides us with an insightful but very brief account of Labotsibeni's maneuvering her way to the head of the Swazi monarchy upon her husband's (King Mbandzeni) death in 1889.¹¹⁸ However, this account too, leaves us with

¹¹⁶B.H.L. Nyeko, "The Influence of Foreign Advisers and Educated Africans Upon the Swazi Rulers in the Early Colonial Period" (Unpublished paper, located in the Library, Special Collection, University of Swaziland, n.d.), pp. 19-20.

¹¹⁷Balam Nyeko, "The Rule of the Dlamini in Nineteenth-Century Swaziland," *Tarik*, 4 (1972), 44.

¹¹⁸Balam Nyeko, "Pre-Nationalist Resistance to Colonial Rule: Swaziland on the Eve of the Imposition of British Administration, 1890-1902" (A paper presented at the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, History Workshop, Gaborone, Botswana, September 3-8, 1973. A copy of this paper is available in the Library, Special

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a skeletal picture of Labotsibeni's role in Swazi politics. Therefore, in these two papers we have a scholarly gap, which will be partially addressed in this dissertation.

So far Nyeko is the only historian of the history of Swaziland, who has attempted to provide a synthesis of the historiography of Swaziland, with an emphasis on the colonial period. He has done this by situating the historiography of Swaziland within a broader context of historiography in Africa, which focuses on the European colonial era. Instead of attempting to duplicate an otherwise excellent job done by Nyeko, I would rather draw the attention of scholars to his two papers on the subject.¹¹⁹

Nyeko points out themes which have received scholarly attention; gaps, and underlying assumptions in the historiography of Swaziland. Two of his main points, however, deserve a special consideration, because of their pertinent relevance to the topic at hand. He remarked that the historiography of Swaziland remained unaffected by the revisionist trends of the of mid-1970s, which took place in other parts of Africa. The reason for this, Nyeko suggests, that "the application of the 'tradition' and 'modern' paradigm in Swazi studies has contributed to Swaziland's remaining largely outside the mainstream of revisionist historiography of the mid-1970s."¹²⁰ Furthermore, he emphasized the centrality of the 'traditional' paradigm and its negative impact on the

Collection, University of Swaziland), pp.1-18. For our reference, see pp.10-14.

¹¹⁹See Balam Nyeko, "Interpreting the Colonial Period in African History: the case of Swaziland" (Paper presented for discussion to the History Staff Seminars, the University of Zambia, 24 February 1982), pp.1-16; and Balam Nyeko, "The Colonial Period in the Historiography of Swaziland" (Paper presented at the Conference on Zimbabwean History: Progress and Development, University of Zimbabwe, 23-27 August 1982), pp.1-17.

¹²⁰Nyeko, "The Colonial Period in the Historiography of Swaziland," p.12.

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historiography of Swaziland, when he said, "the willingness of scholars to collaborate with the 'traditional' ruling elite and to produce studies that tend to bolster or even legitimize that elite's position in the country - all this has tended to ensure that Swazi studies have remained conservative."¹²¹ By these statements Nyeko has made a most profound observation that has bedeviled the historiography of Swaziland until very recently when scholars began to be critical of the notion of "Swazi tradition" as used by the monarchy.¹²² He also argues that studies on the social and economic development of Swaziland were "dominated by the South African academic traditions."¹²³ Such a

¹²¹*Ibid.*

¹²²For few scholars who are critical of the Swazi rulers' use or abuse of the notion of 'tradition,' see Richard Levin, "Swaziland's Tinkhundla and the Myth of Swazi Tradition," Journal of Contemporary African Studies, 10, 2 (1991), 1-23; Richard Levin, "Is this the Swazi Way?," Transformation, 13 (1990), 46-66, and has later incorporated some of his arguments in these articles into his latest work, When the Sleeping Grass Awakens (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1997), Robert Martin, "Swaziland: The Ideal Bantustan," Transition, 47, 9 (1975), 65-66.

¹²³Nyeko, "The Colonial Period in the Historiography of Swaziland," p.12. With regard to the South African academic traditions, one would argue that the South African historiography was for a long time confined within the liberal-radical-conservative interpretations with very little connection with historiographical trends in Africa. This pattern was only challenged by the advent of Shula Marks, and her colleagues such as Stanley Trapido and Anthony Atmore and a generation of her students like Philip Bonner, Peter Delius and Colin Bundy, just to mention a few, to the South African historiography. For the liberal-radical-conservative approaches, see Harrison M. Wright, The Burden of the Present: Liberal-radical Controversy over Southern African History (Cape Town: David Philip, 1977). The classic culmination of the liberal view is a two volume work by Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson, eds., The Oxford History of South Africa: South Africa To 1870, Vol. I (London: Oxford University Press, first published, 1969, reprinted 1975) and The Oxford History of South Africa: South Africa, 1870-1966, Vol. II (London: Oxford University Press, first published 1975, reprinted 1978). For an appraisal of the trends in South African history, see Ken Smith, The changing past: Trends in South African historical writing (Athens, Ohio University Press, 1988); Christopher Saunders, The Making of the South African Past (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988); Shula Marks,

domination, Nyeko contends, discouraged the application of current approaches to African studies, which had yielded new interpretations elsewhere in independent Africa. Nyeko has correctly identified the reasons for lack of innovativeness in the writing and interpretation of the historiography of Swaziland. However, he ignores an important and well-documented theme in South African historiography, the creation of the so-called 'native policy', which is instructive for our understanding of the process by which the British and the Transvaal governments established their colonialism in Swaziland in the 1890s.¹²⁴ A failure to tap this rich body of South African literature for the study of the history of Swaziland has resulted in the scholarly misidentification of Swaziland of the 1890s as still being an independent country, whereas this was in fact a period during which the Anglo-Transvaal governments established their colonial order in Swaziland. The other result of the scholarly neglect of the South African literature is that scholars of

"The Historiography of South Africa: Recent Developments," in Bogumil Jewsiewicki and David Newbury, eds., African Historiographies (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1986), pp. 165-176, and Shula Marks, "Review Article: African and Afrikaner History," Journal of African History, XI, 3 (1970), 435-447.

¹²⁴See for example, Benjamin Kline, Genesis of Apartheid: British African Policy in the Colony of Natal, 1845-1893 (New York: University Press of America, 1988); Edgar H. Brookes, The History of Native Policy in South Africa From 1830 to the Present Day (Cape Town: Nasionale Pers, 1924); E.H. Brookes, The Colour Problems of South Africa (Lovedale, Cape Province, South Africa: Lovedale Press, 1934, republished by Negro University Press: Connecticut, 1970); and E.H. Brookes, White Rule in South Africa, 1830-1910: Varieties in Government Policies Affecting Africans (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1974); David Welsh, The Roots of Segregation: Native Policy in Colonial Natal, 1845-1910 (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1971, reprinted 1973), and Ifor L. Evans, Native Policy in Southern Africa (London: Cambridge University Press, 1934). (All these works, except Kline's, were already available when Nyeko made his observation.)

Swazi history have tended to assume that European colonialism did not begin in Swaziland until 1902 when the British took over Swaziland. This is a gross misunderstanding of the coming of European colonialism to Swaziland, a misjudgment I have previously addressed elsewhere, but through a narrowly conceived theme, namely the use of European law in the imposition of colonialism in Swaziland.¹²⁵ In this current work, I broaden my earlier arguments and examine important nuances omitted in my earlier work.

Jonathan Crush approaches the history of colonial Swaziland from a geographical perspective. He analyzes the colonial division of space, the restructuring of labor relations in colonial Swaziland, and incorporation of Swazi society into the regional capitalist economy through the recruitment for Swazi labor by South African mines and settler industries in Swaziland. He also employs the dependence paradigm to examine the extent of Swaziland's dependence on South Africa.¹²⁶ Crush makes a contribution to the historiography of Swaziland by infusing it with scholarly trends from elsewhere in Africa. By so doing, he diminishes an exaggerated notion of Swazi exceptionalism which is usually found in works which employ the traditional paradigm on Swaziland.

¹²⁵See Manelisi Genge, "Law and the Imposition of Colonial Rule in Swaziland, 1890-1898" (M.A. thesis, Ohio University, Athens, November 1992).

¹²⁶See Jonathan Crush, "The Colonial Division of Space: The Significance of the Swaziland Land Partition," International Journal of African Historical Studies, 13, 1 (1980), 71-86; Jonathan Crush, "Landlords, Tenants and Colonial Social Engineers: the Farm Labour Question in early Colonial Swaziland," Journal of Southern African Studies, 11, 2 (April 1985), 235-257; Jonathan Crush, The Struggle for Swazi Labour, 1890-1920 (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), and Jonathan Crush, "The Parameters of Dependence in Southern Africa: A Case Study of Swaziland," Journal of Southern African Affairs, 4 (1979), 55-66.

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However, in the their sum, Crush's works focus on themes of labor and land, themes which have received a considerable scholarly attention in the historiography of Swaziland.¹²⁷ I will not provide a review of works which address labor and land issues in Swaziland, for I do not intend to address such issues in this dissertation. It suffices to draw scholars' attention to the works cited in the previous footnote.

John Daniel, a political scientist, examines the spread of capitalist economy to colonial and postcolonial Swaziland. He does this within a context of political economy approach and he situates his analysis of Swaziland in the southern African regional perspective. He contends that the political economy of Swaziland is not different from that of other 'Third World' countries. For example, he argues that Swaziland's

position and function within the world economy is the typical one of i) an exporter of primary commodities and raw materials whose profitability depends upon a world-market pricing system beyond her control, ii) a supplier of cheap labour to both the local enclaves of foreign capital as well as to an external

¹²⁷See for example, Hamilton Sipho Simelane, "Landlessness and Imperial Response in Swaziland, 1938-1950," Journal of Southern African Studies, 17, 4 (December 1991), 717-741; Hamilton Sipho Simelane, "Land, Labour and the Establishment of Commercial Forests in Swaziland, 1947-1962," Journal of Eastern African Research & Development, 17 (1987), 124-146; Alan Booth, "The Development of the Swazi Labour Market, 1900-1968," South African Labour Bulletin, vol 7, nos. 6 & 7 (June 1982), 34-57; F. de Vletter, in collaboration with M.H. Doran, A.R.C. Low, F.D. Prinz and B.D. Rosen-Prinz, "Labour Migration in Swaziland," in W.R. Bohning, ed., Black Migration to South Africa: A Selection of Policy-Oriented Research (Geneva: ILO, 1981), pp. 45-89; C.P. You, "Imperial Land Policy in Swaziland and the Swazi Response," Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth Studies, 7 (1978), 56-70; Martin Fransman, "The Colonial State and the land Question in Swaziland, 1903-1907" (University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Collected Seminar Papers on the Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries, vol. 9, October 1977 - June 1978), 27-38, and F.J. Mashasha, "The Swazi and Land Partition" (University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Collected Seminar Papers on the Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries, Vol. 4, 1972), 87-107.

market, and iii) an importer of manufactured goods.¹²⁸

Daniel's work emphasizes the period from the 1960s to the postcolonial era.

However, of even more importance to this current work, Daniel does not deal with power players in his work. Therefore, one does not see what moves the events he analyzes. In my work I attempt to address this scholarly gap by identifying individual power movers and discussing their roles.

Other scholars have analyzed the colonial state in Swaziland with emphasis on capital, labor and class. They are concerned mainly with the capital accumulation by the colonial state and the resultant contradictions between the colonial state and the settler economy. For example, Jonathan Crush has explored the relation of the colonial state and one settler company: the Swaziland Corporation, with reference to contradictions of accumulation and the power of the colonial state in its attempt to control settler accumulation from 1903 to 1910.¹²⁹ Martin Fransman, an economist, uses a Marxist approach to examine a similar theme with emphasis on the colonial state and the land question in colonial Swaziland from 1903 to 1907. He also explores the industrial relations between the labor, capital and the state in Swaziland in the period, 1962-1977.¹³⁰

¹²⁸John Daniel, "The Political Economy of Colonial and Post-Colonial Swaziland," South African Labour Bulletin, vol. 7, nos. 6 & 7 (June 1982), 90.

¹²⁹Jonathan S. Crush, "Settler-Estate Production, Monopoly Control, and the Imperial Response: the Case of the Swaziland Corporation Ltd," African Economic History, 8 (Fall 1979), pp. 183-197.

¹³⁰See respectively Martin Fransman, "The Colonial State and the Land Question in Swaziland, 1903-1907," The Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries, Vol. 9 (Collected Seminar Papers, University of London: Institute of Commonwealth

Alan R. Booth has analyzed the forces which influenced demands for Swazi labor between 1945 and 1960. He has argued that there was a close relationship between the intensification of capitalism and labor recruiting agencies in the post-Second World War era in Swaziland.¹³¹ Josiah Mlahagwa traces the manner in which the capital and the colonial state led to the collapse of the Dlamini power in Swaziland from the nineteenth-century to the early twentieth century. He is evidently influenced by Philip Bonner's argument on the demise of the Dlamini power.¹³² However, like Bonner before him, Mlahagwa confuses the diminution of the Dlamini power by the colonial state with demise. The precise nature and place of the Swazi monarchy or Dlamini power in colonial Swaziland is still a matter of dispute among historians of colonial history in Swaziland. I argue in this work that the Dlamini power did not collapse with the coming of European colonialism. Instead, it was submerged under the authority of the colonial state and it remained a power to reckon with in the affairs of Swaziland.

Death has deprived us of Professor M.H.Y.Kaniki's scholarly input to the historiography of Swaziland. He died recently, April 1999, leaving behind an incomplete

Studies, October 1977-June 1978), pp. 27-38, and Martin Fransman, "Labour, Capital and the State in Swaziland, 1962-1977," South African Labour Bulletin, Vol 7, nos. 6 & 7 (June 1982), 58-89.

¹³¹Alan R. Booth, "Capitalism and the Competition for Swazi Labour, 1945-1960," Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 13, 1 (October 1986), 125-150.

¹³²Josiah B. Mlahagwa, "Capital, Class and State in Colonial Swaziland: The Hegemony of Capital and the Demise of Dlamini Power" (Paper submitted to the International Development Research Centre, Nairobi, April 1982), pp. 2-23. Mlahagwa cites Philip Bonner, "The Rise, Consolidation and Disintegration of Dlamini power in Swaziland Between 1820 and 1889: A Study in the Relationship of Foreign Affairs to Internal Political Development" (D. Phil. Thesis, University of London, 1977).

work for which he had already laid a foundation. He was attempting to explore the reasons that led to the survival of the Swazi monarchy on the face of the British colonialism from 1903 to 1968. He argues that in spite of what appears as a robust Swazi monarchy in the 1990s, it "did in fact suffer serious colonial and other onslaught. It was maimed and almost disappeared from the political landscape of the continent before it was fully restored at independence under the leadership of King Sobhuza II."¹³³ He concludes that "colonial relations were dynamic, and the key actors like Sobhuza II had limited alternatives in responding to the dynamism of the time."¹³⁴ Kaniki's work is among the few scholarly works which specifically address politics in colonial Swaziland. It is evident from these preliminary findings that Kaniki brings to the historiography of Swaziland a vast and rich knowledge of other colonial situations in Africa and elsewhere. Therefore, the history of colonialism in Swaziland is poised for a reinterpretation from historians like him and others. For instance, Kaniki challenges some of the existing

¹³³Kaniki, "Colonialism," p. 1. (This paper presents Kaniki's preliminary research findings. But for our purpose, besides the insights which he provides, his work confirms my view that there is a scholarly gap in our understanding of power relations in colonial Swaziland. My work explores these relations from an earlier period than Kaniki and then overlaps with his.) In recent times other scholars have begun to be critical of Hilda Kuper's works on Swaziland. For example, Hilary Standing points out that Kuper's research findings present empirical and conceptual problems to her (Kuper) framework, which is based on British structural functionalist anthropology. She also argues that Kuper's portrayal of economic relations between the Swazi aristocracy and the commoners as based on the former's giving generously to the latter and the reciprocal nature of kinship relations, "disguises the permanent nature of the inequality between them." See Hilary Standing, "Gender Relations and Social Transformation in Swaziland: Some Comments on Future Research Possibilities," in Michael Neocosmos, ed., Social Relations in Rural Swaziland: Critical Analyses (University of Swaziland: Social Science Research Unit, 1987), p.129.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 40.

interpretations of the history of Swaziland. He points out that, "the status of the Ngwenyama [title usually given to Swazi kings since the precolonial times] under colonialism has been a subject of much confusion and historical illogicality."¹³⁵ During the Anglo-Transvaal colonial period in Swaziland in the 1890s, the title of a Swazi king was, as was the case elsewhere in Africa, degraded from the status of a king to that of a Paramount Chief. Kaniki argues, "this was a fundamental change; it was not a matter of semantics as [Hilda] Kuper and others might have wanted us to believe.... To call the colonial Ngwenyama 'king' is evidently to distort, if not falsefy [sic], Swazi colonial history."¹³⁶ Kaniki takes issue with Nyeko's characterization of the British administration in Swaziland as "neither direct, nor indirect, but parallel," for in his view such a characterization "cannot stand [a] rigorous test." Instead, Kaniki asserts, "colonialism was a reality even to Swaziland."¹³⁷ Kaniki's taking an exception to Nyeko's characterization of colonial rule in Swaziland reopens the history of colonialism in the country to further studies. In fact, his objection calls for a thorough reevaluation of the scholarly knowledge of the history of colonialism in Swaziland.

My work to-date has analyzed the use of the European law in the imposition of colonialism in Swaziland.¹³⁸ Although I brought a new concept to the study of

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹³⁶*Ibid.*

¹³⁷Kaniki, "Colonialism," pp. 14-15.

¹³⁸See Genge, "Law." Recently has emerged among the Africanists a scholarly interest to the study of colonial law; the intersection of African legal systems with European colonial law; social and cultural changes. For example, see a collection of essays in Kristin Mann and Richard Roberts, eds., Law in Colonial Africa (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991); Robert B. Seidman, "The Reception of English Law in Colonial

colonialism in Swaziland: law as an instrument, which was employed to reshape the emerging socio-political and economic relations, I did not emphasize the role of Labotsibeni or any queen mother or queen regent in the affairs of Swaziland.

Alan R. Booth examines the manner in which the European colonial courts protected Swazi women against what he terms "the discriminatory justice of the traditional chiefs' courts in matters of physical and sexual abuse."¹³⁹ Booth perceives colonial courts as liberating institutions for Swazi women against the chiefly power and justice. This view contradicts what is generally known about a colonial state, that it, it was neither a liberator nor a reformer. For example, since the advent of Martin Chanock's work on customary law in colonial Africa, Africanist legal scholars have argued that there was a convergence of interests between the officials of a colonial state and men who were power holders of a colonized society. The convergence of interests was based on the desire of these two groups to refashion power relations and control of the local populations, and it resulted in the formation of the customary law in colonial Africa.¹⁴⁰ Likewise, in the case of Southern Rhodesia, Teresa A. Barnes argues that the

Africa," in Yash Ghai, Robin Luckham and Francis Snyder, eds., The Political Economy of Law: A Third World Reader (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 107-116; Francis Snyder, "The Creation of 'Customary Law' in Senegal," in *ibid.*, pp. 144-154, and Martin Chanock, Law, Custom and Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

¹³⁹Alan R. Booth, "European Courts Protect Women and Witches': Colonial Law Courts as Redistributors of Power in Swaziland, 1920-1950," Journal of Southern African Studies, 18, 2 (June 1992), 253.

¹⁴⁰For a discussion of this, see Chanock, Law, and other works which follow Martin's theoretical framework. I have already referred to some of such works earlier in this chapter.

colonial state, white settler community and the African men all attempted to control the socioeconomic mobility of African women.¹⁴¹ In the case of colonial Nigeria, Judith Van Allen has argued that British colonialism has deprived the Igbo women of their precolonial political power.¹⁴² Therefore, Booth's portrayal of European courts as protectors of women and 'witches' does not only challenge our understanding of a colonial state, but also leaves us with an incomplete knowledge of a colonial state in Swaziland. He focuses on the period from 1920-1950. In a series of unpublished papers Booth also explores the theme of colonial law in Swaziland within the paradigm of political economy and resistance during the era of Sobhuza II, specifically the period 1920-1950.¹⁴³ In sum, these papers throw light on how the practice of administrative law was a contested instrument in colonial situations.

In spite of the limited studies on the history of European colonialism in

¹⁴¹See Teresa A. Barnes, "The Fight for Control of African Women's Mobility in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1900-1939," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 17, 3 (1992), 586-608.

¹⁴²See Judith Van Allen, "Sitting on a Man": Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women," Canadian Journal of African Studies, VI, ii (1972), 165-181. For a similar view as Van Allen's on women in politics and colonialism in colonial and postcolonial Africa, see Jean O'Barr and Kathryn Firmin-Sellers, "African women in politics," in Margaret Jean hay and Sharon Stichter, eds., African Women South of the Sahara (New York: Longman, 2nd edition, 1995, first published 1984), pp. 189-212.

¹⁴³See Alan R. Booth, "Colonial Law and the Politics of the Swazi Monarchy: King Sobhuza II and Regionalism, 1921-1950" (Paper presented at the African Studies Association Conference, Seattle, Washington, November 20, 1992), pp.1-39; Alan R. Booth, "'Where Do You Get the Law to Chop a Whiteman': Peasant Resistance and the Political Economy of Law in Colonial Swaziland, 1920-1950" (February 1991. I'm grateful to Booth for sharing with me a draft copy of this paper.), pp. 1-65, and Alan R. Booth, "Aspects of the Political Economy of Law in Colonial Swaziland, 1920-1950" (Paper presented at the African Studies Association Conference, Baltimore, MD, November 2, 1990), pp. 2-58.

Swaziland, the emaSwati share some colonial experience like other colonized people both in Africa and elsewhere in the world. For example, ever since the advent of Europeans, the Boers and the British, to the eastern Transvaal and in Swaziland, the emaSwati lost some of their lands and people through boundary demarcation and political bargaining with these Europeans. However, some historians of Swazi history have addressed this phenomenon outside a colonial context. For example, Hugh Macmillan has explored the results of this colonial division of people, instead of examining this division of the emaSwati as a further indication that Swaziland was indeed a colonized country like other countries in Africa. He, for instance, has examined "the changing relationship between the Swazi of Swaziland and those of the Transvaal from the time of the demarcation of a border between them in the late nineteenth century until the present day [1986]." He was also concerned with "the changing patterns of ethnic awareness, or at least ethnic assertion, in the two halves of the divided nation, and to relate this to changes in their political and material conditions."¹⁴⁴ Macmillan's piece is well documented and does address its stated theses well. However, it suffers from what Nyeko has observed as the domination of studies on Swaziland by the South African academic traditions. Macmillan draws his insights from the South African historiography, which has until recently generally avoided a theme of colonialism in its context. However, he completely ignores a thick body of literature on the theme of the British and the Boers' 'native policy'

¹⁴⁴Hugh Macmillan, "A Nation Divided?: The Swazi in Swaziland and the Transvaal, 1865-1986," in Leroy Vail, ed., The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989, paperback 1991), pp. 289-90.

in South Africa, a crucial literature which sheds light on the Anglo-Boer colonial rule in Swaziland.¹⁴⁵ Macmillan also overlooks historiographical trends which deal with the history of colonialism in Africa and elsewhere. Here then, lies a partial explanation for the historiography of Swaziland's trailing behind other historiographical trends in Africa. Ieuan Ll. Griffiths and D. C. Funnell have addressed Macmillan's weakness by situating the delineation of Swaziland's colonial boundaries within the context of the drawing of colonial borders by Europeans in Africa.¹⁴⁶

The paradigm of 'tradition' and 'modern' has been employed by a number of scholars to the study of Swaziland. However, with the exception of only a few, the majority of these scholars did not discuss the general limitations of this paradigm as it

¹⁴⁵For the pioneering studies which take the phenomenon of colonialism as their point of departure in the South African historiography, see K. Good, "South African Settler Colonialism: A Present Day Summation," East Africa Journal, 9 (1972), 4-13; Bernard M. Magubane, The Making of a Racist State: British Imperialism and the Union of South Africa (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1996); Timothy Keegan, Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the racial Order (Cape Town: David Philip, 1996); Timothy J. Stapleton, Maqoma: Xhosa Resistance to Colonial Advance, 1798-1873 (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1994), and Clifton C. Crais, White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-Industrial South Africa: The Making of the Colonial Order in the Eastern Cape, 1770-1865 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992). For an insightful analysis of a post-apartheid South Africa as a postcolonial era, see Mahmood Mamdani, "When Does a Settler Become a native?: Reflections of the Colonial Roots of Citizenship in Equatorial and South Africa," Electronic Mail & Guardian, May 26, 1998, pp. 1-11. (This is a text of inaugural lecture as A.C. Jordan Professor of African Studies, University of Cape Town, Wednesday, May 13, 1998.) For Mamdani's fuller discussion of a postcolonial South Africa, see his book, Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of late Colonialism (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), chapter VII. For literature on 'native policy' in South Africa, see note number 89 above.

¹⁴⁶Ieuan Ll. Griffiths and D. C. Funnell, "The Abortive Swazi Land Deal," African Affairs, 90 (1991), 51-64.

was criticized elsewhere by other scholars.¹⁴⁷ They were also not critical of the Swazi monarchy's manipulation of 'tradition' to extract compliance from the emaSwati general population to its rule. Instead, they have taken the notion of 'tradition' as an a priori conjecture. For instance, Christian P. Potholm has argued that, "the success of the ngwenyama of Swaziland, Sobhuza II, offers a substantial amendment to the widely held theory that modern political institutions, economic development, and independence are necessarily inimical to traditional African authorities."¹⁴⁸ Thereafter, Potholm attempts to show the limitations of such a theory by presenting an idealized version of how Sobhuza II has synthesized 'tradition' with 'modernity' for the benefit of his people. Besides, the obvious point of presenting a male-centered account of Swaziland under the European colonial rule, Potholm, fits well a description of being one of the scholars who employ the term, "culture change" in order to avoid analyzing "the political realities of colonization."¹⁴⁹

Other scholars have taken issue with Potholm's paradigm of 'traditional' and

¹⁴⁷Etienne and Leacock have, among other aspects, criticized this paradigm, for "the 'traditional/modern dichotomy also contains an implicit value judgment, not only by suggesting that 'tradition' means 'static', but by suggesting that 'modern' is somehow better. The distinction makes Western society the ideal and is not far removed from nineteenth-century ideas of 'progress.' ...Awareness of the value judgment implicit in this term has led to a tendency to discard it in favor of more neutral terms, such as 'culture change'....Underlying the superficial neutrality of such terms as 'culture change' is the systematic avoidance of the political realities of colonization." See Mona Etienne and Eleanor Leacock, "Introduction," in Mona Etienne and Eleanor Leacock, eds., Women and Colonization: Anthropological Perspectives (New York: Praeger, 1980), p. 5.

¹⁴⁸Christian P. Potholm, Swaziland: The Dynamics of Political Modernization (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 1.

¹⁴⁹See Etienne and Leacock, "Introduction," p. 5.

'modern,' in pointing out, "the real question is not whether particular institutions are traditional or modern, but whether they express the aspirations of the mass of the people and are attuned to their needs."¹⁵⁰ Deprecating the use of the term 'tradition' by scholars in studying Swaziland, Robert Martin asserts, "the 'tradition' business in Swaziland is a fraud. It is used to obscure and mystify."¹⁵¹

Alan Booth, for his part, has employed the concept of 'tradition' to trace changes over time in Swaziland from the precolonial to the postcolonial era. The Swazi monarchy, especially under King Sobhuza II is the main actor in Booth's account. To demonstrate Sobhuza II's central position in the history with which Booth is concerned, the latter asserts:

Sobhuza was a remarkable historical figure—surely the greatest of the Swazi kings. He was both a fervent traditionalist and an authentic revolutionary. When he could not outwit his colonial masters he outlasted them, and he survived the colonial period with his people preserved and his own powers immeasurably greater than those he had inherited. And in an age when kings everywhere came toppling down, Sobhuza not only endured but reigned supreme—not so much by the force of arms or money as by the genuine love for his people. His skills as a politician, a diplomat, an entrepreneur, and a humanitarian are already legendary. The character of Swaziland today is deeply reflective of that of the man who ruled it for six decades.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰Robert Martin, "Swaziland: The Ideal Bantustan," Transition, 47, 9 (1975), 65. In this piece, Martin provides an insightful review of Potholm's book, which is cited above. Nyeko cites Martin in demonstrating the historiographical usage of the concept 'tradition' in Swaziland. See Nyeko, "The Colonial Period in the Historiography of Swaziland," p.12.

¹⁵¹Martin, "Swaziland," Transition (1975), 66.

¹⁵²Alan R. Booth, Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983).

However, other scholars who perceive Swaziland as “the ideal Bantustan”¹⁵³ for South Africa disagree with Booth’s portrayal of Sobhuza’s reign. For example, Robert Martin views Sobhuza as ruling Swaziland “through a palace clique for the benefit of South African investors.”¹⁵⁴ Instead of seeing Sobhuza’s skills as “legendary” and having a “genuine love for his people,” Martin perceives Sobhuza as “an eager local ruler [who] maintains order and keeps the mass of the people mesmerized while South African ‘advisers’ get on with the serious business of government.”¹⁵⁵ Even Booth’s claim that Sobhuza did not rule through the use of force of arms or money, but only by sincere love for his people, is challenged by Martin’s claims that from 1968 to 1972 Sobhuza not only interfered with the European-style courts of law, but he also used the Parliament, which

¹⁵³Martin supports his thesis that Swaziland is the South African ‘bantustan’ (homeland) by citing the following examples, “Swaziland belongs to the Southern African Customs Union; its currency is the Rand [which is a South African currency]; investment capital comes predominantly from South Africa; most of its trade is with South Africa; the Chief Justice and Attorney-General are white South Africans; vast areas of Swaziland are owned by white South Africans; the Civil Service is heavily staffed with white South African ‘advisers’; a close confidant of the King is a member of the Broederbond; and the newly formed Army is under the command of an Englishman. In 1973 an enterprising cinema-owner in Swaziland planned to show the film ‘Last Tango in Paris’, obviously hoping to draw large numbers of customers from South Africa where it was banned. The South African authorities were able to prevent the screening of the film.” See Martin, Transition (1975), 65. John Daniel mentions some names of the white South African ‘advisers’ who advised King Sobhuza II, as B.J. Vorster, the then South African Minister of Justice and later Prime Minister; Van Wyk de Vries, a supreme court judge; Doctor H.J. Von Eck, a leading industrialist. See Daniel, Swaziland, p. 16, endnote 9. For a brief discussion of a secrete relations between Swaziland and South Africa, see Griffiths and Funnell, “Abortive,” 51-64.

¹⁵⁴Martin, “Swaziland,” Transition, 65.

¹⁵⁵*Ibid.*

was a legacy of the British colonial system in Swaziland, to be his rubber-stamp. Furthermore, Martin points out that steps were taken to silence opposition members who were elected to Parliament in 1972. When the Appeal Court did not find fault with those resisting Sobhuza's measures, the latter abolished the Westminster-model constitution on April 12, 1973. According to Martin, Sobhuza banned the Constitution "to demonstrate that he would not tolerate any question of his power."¹⁵⁶ However, Daniel has interpreted Sobhuza II's reasons for abolition of the constitution and thereby centralizing the state power in his hands as attempts "to bolster his capacity to counter challenges posed by a number of internal and regional political developments."¹⁵⁷ There was an emerging opposition to the royal power within the country, which came to the surface during the 1972 election with the defeat of Mfanasibili Dlamini, a senior prince and Cabinet Minister, by the Ngwane National Liberatory Congress opposition party. Furthermore, there erupted labor strikes in Swaziland, which coincided with similar strikes in South Africa and the anticolonial armed struggles in colonial Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe) and in Mozambique. South African government agents were at hand to help Sobhuza to craft his authoritarian approach in order to suppress the upsurge of popular mass democratic forces in Swaziland.¹⁵⁸ In their sum, these events threatened the survival of the monarchy in Swaziland. Therefore, a subtler political history of Swaziland ought to

¹⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 6. Martin's remarks were specifically directed to Potholm's work, as discussed above. However, since Booth employs the paradigm of 'tradition' and has Sobhuza at the center of his account Martin's observations speak to his work as well.

¹⁵⁷Daniel, Swaziland, p. 8.

¹⁵⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

take into account regional developments, instead of focusing exclusively on Swaziland. In my dissertation I situate the history of Swaziland within historical events in southern Africa.

Peter Harries-Jones has criticized Booth for failing to recognize that Swaziland is a “bantustan’ by any other name.” Harries-Jones also takes exception with Booth for his failure to situate his account of Swaziland within a region-wide context, instead of merely concentrating only on its internal affairs, because an approach which focuses exclusively on internal affairs “tends to blinker the reader.”¹⁵⁹ However, contrary to Harries-Jones and Martin, who perceive Swaziland as a South African ‘bantustan,’ Daniel views Swazi-South African state relationship as “practically a formal alliance and a strategy for survival” within a regional context.¹⁶⁰ Thus, Daniel suggests a subtler understanding of Swazi-South African state power relations. This view emerges when one locates one’s analysis of the events in Swaziland within a regional context, an aspect which is missing in Booth’s work, which employs a notion of Swazi traditionalism as its mode of analysis.

¹⁵⁹Peter Harries-Jones, reviewed Alan R. Booth, Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom, in Canadian Journal of African Studies, 19, 2 (1985), 468-469.

¹⁶⁰Daniel, Swaziland, p. 4. Other scholars have even analyzed the changes in agriculture in Swaziland within the context of South African dominance in that country. See for example, D.C. Funnell, Under the Shadow of Apartheid: Agrarian Transformation in Swaziland (Aldershot: Avebury, 1991). Swaziland’s relation with South Africa has persisted to be a serious concern even to the European donor agencies which are concerned with development agenda in the region as recently as in the 1980s. These donors were worried with what they perceive as Swaziland’s collaboration with the then apartheid South Africa. See Samuel Falle, Karlis Goppers, and Lars Johansson Looking Both Ways: Swaziland between South Africa and SADCC. An Evaluation of Sweden’s development co-operation with Swaziland (Stockholm: Swedish International Development Authority, 1986).

Indeed, Booth's work relies largely on sources that deal with Swaziland and to some extent, on those which focus on Botswana and Lesotho (Swaziland's former sister colonies under the label of being the British High Commissioner Territories¹⁶¹). In this sense, Booth's work, just like that of Matsebula as discussed above, is too self-contained to satisfy a historian's quest for both general and specific contexts within which to cast one's story. Booth presents the Swazi 'tradition' in static terms. However, in spite of the above mentioned criticisms of Booth's work, this book remains a useful source, because it has valuable information on contemporary Swaziland. Although Booth does mention Labotsibeni, his discussion is very thin on her role in the affairs of Swaziland. Therefore, like many other scholarly works on the Swazi monarchy, Booth's account is male-centered on the person of Sobhuza II. It is this bias against the role of queen mothers in the politics of the monarchy in Swaziland that my dissertation is attempting to remedy. My work also situates the history of Swaziland within the regional power dynamics. By so doing, it attempts to draw attention to both internal and external factors which shaped politics in colonial Swaziland.

¹⁶¹The only scholarly work which has lumped the three countries together (Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland) is that of Richard P. Stevens, Lesotho, Botswana, & Swaziland: The Former High Commission Territories in Southern Africa (London: Pall Mall Press, 1967). Stevens has done a poor job in combining these three countries in his study. Since the publication of his work, scholars of the history of Swaziland have drawn attention to a need to compare the settlement of Europeans in Swaziland with that of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), instead of Lesotho and Botswana. Others have criticized Stevens for failing to take into account events in South Africa when reconstructing the history of these countries, and for his failure to analyze the nature of political power in these countries and how the political parties were embedded in the existing precolonial power formations. For these criticisms, see a review of Stevens' book by Anthony Atmore, Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, Vol VI, 1 (March 1968), p. 88.

Hugh Macmillan employs the paradigm of 'tradition' to examine the political history of Swaziland from the period of decolonization to the death of King Sobhuza II in 1982. He does acknowledge some observers' criticism of the term 'tradition' "as something which is constantly being made."¹⁶² However, Macmillan completely overlooks a concern of one of the scholars of the studies of Swaziland with regard to the scholarly use of the paradigm of 'tradition.' Robert Martin has raised a two-fold question in his criticism of the paradigm 'tradition', "First, is the Swaziland political system in fact 'traditional' and, secondly, does the concept of 'tradition' have any value in the contemporary context?"¹⁶³ Macmillan's failure to address Martin's concerns led to his presentation of a history of the Swazi monarchy which obscures rather than clarifies the past of Swaziland under colonial rule. Like Martin, I suggest that the paradigm 'tradition' is no longer viable as a scholarly analytical tool for the study of the history of Swaziland. Besides other criticisms of this paradigm which are discussed above, it also has an effect of depriving the historical actors of their self-consciousness in the events in which they are engaged. 'Tradition' becomes an agent instead of persons who weigh their decisions and options before taking an action or a move. Thus, the 'tradition' business ought to be

¹⁶²For this he cites an unscholarly view of Raphael Samuel. See Hugh Macmillan, "Swaziland: Decolonization and the Triumph of 'Tradition,'" Journal of Modern African Studies, 23 4 (1985), 643. An in-depth scholarly treatment of this view for colonial Africa is provided by Terence Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., The Invention of Tradition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983, reprinted 1994), pp. 211-262. For invention of traditions in general, see Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *ibid.*

¹⁶³Martin, "Swaziland," 66.

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abandoned by historians. Maybe it is time that scholars think of replacing the concept 'tradition' or 'traditional' with another term, such as precolonial, though this has its biases, when referring to the precolonial institutions in African societies. As recently as 1982 Josiah Mlahagwa has reminded us that it is "incorrect to categorize the Swazi aristocracy as a traditional ruling class even at the local level,"¹⁶⁴ for the British colonial administration had eroded its 'traditional' base by the 1910s.

Leroy Vail and Landeg White argue that the Swazi tradition with regard to Sobhuza II era is in fact an invented tradition. They analyze thirty-five poems by men who belong to the royal house and were the late King Sobhuza II's contemporaries. Then, they conclude that such poems "represent an official history of the kingdom of Swaziland's ruling house during the mid-1960s." They argue that first, the poems are "extremely neotraditional [in] character of the content and the language." Second, that "although these *tibongo* [poems] are described as having been handed down with little change over the generations, they have in fact little in common with the earlier collection of Swazi praise poems."¹⁶⁵ These observations demonstrate the uses and abuses of tradition by the Swazi royalists. Therefore, historians ought to be skeptical of any claims of explanation based on Swazi tradition in their reconstruction of the history of Swaziland. Otherwise, will continue to perpetuate the official version of the history of

¹⁶⁴Mlahagwa, "Capital, Class and State in Colonial Swaziland," p. 20.

¹⁶⁵Leroy Vail and Landeg White, Power and the Praise Poem: Southern African Voices in History (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), p. 156. For Vail and White's discussion of tradition in Swaziland, see chapter 5, titled, "Swazi Royal Praises: The Invention of Tradition," in their book cited here.

Swaziland as seen from the royal house.

Richard Levin, for his part, has approached the history of Swaziland from a sociological perspective. He employs the concepts of hegemony and crisis as his mode of analysis within the context of historical materialism. He points out that, "Swazi Royal power and its transformation, an understanding of which is so important in the analysis of Swazi society, cannot be explained with class relations as the sole referent."¹⁶⁶ He argues that in pre-independent Swaziland, "popular identity was never something simply given, but had to be constructed through a logic of hegemony which witnessed the resuscitation and distortion by the Swazi aristocracy of popular indigenous traditions."¹⁶⁷ Levin focuses on the colonial and postcolonial period, especially the Sobhuza II and post-Sobhuza era. However, other historians of the history of Swaziland have observed some deficiencies in Levin's recent book. Christopher Lowe, for example, points out many factual inaccuracies in Levin's discussion of the history of Swaziland from the late eighteenth-century to 1968. Lowe states that Levin refers to Allen G. Marwick as an anthropologist instead of a resident commissioner from 1935 to 1937. Lowe further notes that Levin inaccurately views between 1907 and 1914 land partitions as having resulted in concessionaires acquiring 'freehold title' in two thirds of the land and the remaining

¹⁶⁶Richard M. Levin, "Hegemony and Crisis: Swazi Royal Power in Transition" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Liverpool, 1985), p. 6.

¹⁶⁷*Ibid.*, p. 12. Levin has reworked his Ph.D. dissertation into a book without substantial changes, see Richard Levin, When the Sleeping Grass Awakens: Land and Power in Swaziland (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1997).

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third for use by the emaSwati.¹⁶⁸ He makes important contributions to the historiography of Swaziland with regard to the role of hegemony as used by the Swazi monarchy to control its subjects. The strength of his most recent work is its pioneering nature in examining the political and social history of Swaziland from King Sobhuza II's death in 1982 to the early 1990s. However, unlike Levin's sociological perspective, my dissertation employs a historical analysis and emphasizes gender and power as its analytical concepts. By so doing, my dissertation attempts to provide a more nuanced historical picture of Swaziland from the 1890s to 1921, a period which is glossed over with some inaccuracies by Levin.

The notion of Swazi 'tradition' permeates all walks of life in the Swazi society. Since the coming of European colonialism to Swaziland at the turn of the nineteenth-century, Swazi tradition has had to contend with European-style ways or instrument of reorganizing the emerging colonial society. One of the areas where such a competition emerged was the field of law. With the colonial division of space into European zones and the Swazi Nation Land,¹⁶⁹ Swazi law and customs were permitted by the colonial

¹⁶⁸See Christopher Lowe's review of Richard Levin, When the Sleeping Grass Awakens: Land and Power in Swaziland, in African Studies, 57, 2 (1998), 241-242.

¹⁶⁹Swazi Nation Land was a block of land, or reserves, set aside for exclusive occupation and use by the emaSwati under an administration of their king, whose status was diminished from kingship to 'paramount chief' by the Anglo-Boer colonial administration in 1898. Since the late 1910s to independence period in 1968, the Swazi monarchy had embarked on a scheme to enlarge the size of the Nation Land by buying back from the British colonial government some lands. Thus, the land upon which the politics of chiefly power, which form Rose's subject, is now larger than it was during the British colonial period. The precolonial social inequalities in Swazi society continued to thrive in the Swazi Nation Land during both the colonial and postcolonial periods. For the existence of such inequalities, especially in the postcolonial era, see Michael Neocosmos,

power to continue to exist, though under certain constraints and significant reconfiguration. Consequently, as in other colonial situations in Africa and elsewhere, there emerged in Swaziland a law which was exclusively applicable to the emaSwati within a context of a colonized country. Africanist legal scholars generally refer to this kind of law as customary law.¹⁷⁰ In the case of Swaziland, Thandabantu Nhlapo, a legal scholar of Swazi law, notes that the Swazi customary law is vague and ambiguous. He cites a Swazi Court President who pointed out to him in 1984 that "the uncertainties of customary law had served the nation well during the colonial era, when a game of hide-and-seek had to be played with the British administration."¹⁷¹ Instead of tracing the development of customary law in Swaziland, this work is interested only to understand the manner in which the Swazi leaders used this kind of law as a game of "hide-and-seek." Of course, Swazi customs and culture had long been subjects of anthropological works.¹⁷²

"Homogeneity and Differences on Swazi Nation Land," in Michael Neocosmos, ed., Social Relations in Rural Swaziland: Critical Analyses (University of Swaziland: Social Science Research Unit, 1987), pp. 17-79. For a legal perspective on the Swazi Nation Land, see Alice K. Armstrong, "Legal Aspects of Land Tenure in Swaziland," (Paper prepared as a part of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperative's research on Changes on Agricultural Land Use: Institutional Constraints and Opportunities. Mbabane, Swaziland, February 1986), pp. 1-52.

¹⁷⁰See for example, Martin Chanock, Law, Custom and Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), and Francis Snyder, "The Creation of 'Customary Law' in Senegal," in Yash Ghai, Robin Luckham and Francis Snyder, eds., The Political Economy of Law: A Third World Reader (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 144-154.

¹⁷¹Thandabantu Nhlapo, Marriage and Divorce in Swazi Law and Custom (Mbabane, Swaziland: Websters, 1992), p. xi.

¹⁷²In addition to Kuper's works as cited above, see Brian Allan Marwick, The Swazi: An Ethnographic Account of the Natives of the Swaziland Protectorate (London: Frank Cass,

The nature of Swaziland-South African relations and Swaziland's relations with other countries is beginning to receive a fresh scholarly attention from scholars of international relations. Paul-Henri Bischoff has recently converted his Ph.D. dissertation into a book in which he analyzes the development of Swaziland's foreign policy in the context of international relations.¹⁷³ Bischoff provides a good synthesis of the precolonial and colonial history of Swaziland. However, he does not address the concerns of the present study.

Michael Stephen presents an insightful piece, though not a scholarly one, on the current politics of Swaziland. He focuses mainly on the challenges facing King Mswati III. He situates his analysis of the current popular democratic demands for political change in Swaziland within the context of the late King Sobhuza II's reign, who died in 1982. However, Stephen's historical account of how the Swazi monarchy won back some of the land alienated by European concessionaires demonstrates an extent to which the history of Swaziland has been associated with male figures in the shape of kings. He

1966), and J.S. Malan, Swazi Culture (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 1985).
¹⁷³See Paul-Henri Bischoff, Swaziland's International Relations and Foreign Policy: A Study of a Small African State in International Relations (New York: Peter Lang, 1990). For a summary of some of the arguments in this work, see Paul-Henri Bischoff, Peace, Nationalism & the State of Human Rights in Swaziland (Project Monograph No. 7. Published by the National University of Lesotho: Maseru, Lesotho, 1989). Other scholars are critical of Bischoff's work. See G.R. Berridge's review of Swaziland's International Relations and Foreign Policy, Journal of Modern African Studies, 33, 1 (1995), 163-164. Indeed, any major development is South Africa raises concerns on the future developments on Swaziland. For an example of expression of such concerns on Swaziland following the first democratic elections in South Africa in April 1994, elections which brought about Nelson Mandela's first Black government in the country, see a Country Report, "Swaziland at the crossroads," The Courier, No. 147 (September-October 1994, no author's name), 18-38.

attributes to Sobhuza II the winning back of such lands, whereas in fact, the scheme to buy back alienated land was initiated during the reign of queen-regent Labotsibeni, when Sobhuza was still a minor.¹⁷⁴ This kind of historical presentation not only deprives the Swazi queen-mothers and queen-regents a place in the development of the history of Swaziland, but in an important way, it perpetuates the notion of the centrality of kings in the history of Swaziland. The Swazi kings are portrayed to have played significant roles, even at times during which we know that they were ineffective. My work attempts to address this misrepresentation of the history of Swaziland by emphasizing the role played by queen-mothers and queen-regents. Stephen discounts the role of these persons in Swazi politics.

Robert H. Davis and his colleagues have examined politics in postcolonial Swaziland. They emphasize such themes as Swazi economy, class structure of independent Swaziland, political struggles and the position of Swaziland in the regional struggles. They devote a space of only four and half pages to colonial history of the country. They note that Queen Regent Labotsibeni played an influential part by recruiting the Swazi labor for the South African mines.¹⁷⁵ Besides the obvious point that

¹⁷⁴See Michael Stephen, "Of Kings & Compromises," Southern Africa Report (June 1997), pp. 9-12.

¹⁷⁵Robert H. Davies, Dan O'Meara and Sipho Dlamini, The Kingdom of Swaziland: A Profile (London: Zed Books, 1985. For another rather dated profile on Swaziland which was intended as an introduction especially to those who would be interested in the affairs of the country, see The Kingdom of Swaziland: A Country Profile (No author, Working Papers, Documents De Travail, Addis Ababa: International Labour Organization, Bureau International Du Travail, 1975). This profile is concerned mainly with socioeconomic data pertaining to employment in Swaziland. Obviously, its audience was exclusively outside Swaziland.

they do not mention Labotsibeni by name, except by merely referring to her as "Queen Regent," by mentioning only her recruitment of the Swazi labor for the South African mines, they grossly misrepresent her role in the history of Swaziland. Granted, this book is indeed a profile of the history of politics in postcolonial Swaziland. However, it is a profile that completely ignores the role of gender in Swazi politics. This is a serious scholarly omission which ought to be addressed in order to have a fuller view of the major actors in Swazi politics.

Recently Laurel L. Rose has employed an anthropological approach in her study of the politics of land tenure in the late twentieth-century Swaziland. She is primarily concerned with "explaining why and how Swazis have protected and reinforced to an unusual extent their customary system of land law."¹⁷⁶ Thus, Rose's main contribution to the historiography of Swaziland is the revision of our scholarly understanding of land tenure in Swaziland¹⁷⁷ by emphasizing the political aspect in the distribution of land by

¹⁷⁶Laurel L. Rose, The Politics of Harmony: Land dispute strategies in Swaziland (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 3.

¹⁷⁷For works on land tenure in Swaziland during the colonial period, see A.J.B. Hughes, Swazi Land Tenure (unpublished work, Institute for Social Research, University of Natal, Durban, South Africa, 1964), pp. 1-315, - - A copy of this document is available at the Swaziland National Archives; A.J.B. Hughes, "Reflections on Traditional and Individual Land Tenure in Swaziland," Journal of Local Administration, 3 (1964), 3-13; A.J.B. Hughes, "Size and Composition of Rural Homestead Groups," in J.F. Hollemna, ed., Experiment in Swaziland (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 121-131; A.J.B. Hughes, "Some Swazi Views on Land Tenure," Africa, 32 (1962), 253-278. For an updated work on Land Tenure in contemporary Swaziland, see Richard Levin, "Traditional Land Tenure in Swaziland: Technical Efficiency, Problems of Democratic Organisation and the Value of Legalistic Classifications," in Michael Neocosmos, ed., Social Relations in Rural Swaziland: Critical Essays (University of Swaziland: Social Science Research Unit, 1987), pp. 151-170.

chiefs in what is commonly known as the Swazi Nation Land. Rose does apply an aspect gender analysis, though on a very limited scope, when she examines land dispute strategies by women in Swaziland. However, she is concerned mainly with chiefly power and changes in land tenure. Her work does not address the topic of the present dissertation.

There is still a scarcity of historical works which focus mainly on women in Swaziland. Hence, historians who attempt to write a history of women in Swaziland still rely heavily on secondary sources which fall outside the discipline of history. Historian Ackson M. Kanduza provides an overview of how various scholars have studied women in Swaziland. He employs Swazi culture and tradition as baseline for his discussion of the accumulation of property by Swazi women. He makes two arguments: First, he argues that "claims that women were prohibited from owning property have ignored cultural provisions which have allowed women to acquire most important resources such as land and cattle." Second, that women "have played a decisive role in decision-making processes pertaining to utilisation of the resources they acquire under Swazi law and tradition."¹⁷⁸ In spite of Kanduza's claim that women accumulated property under Swazi law and tradition, his conclusion contradicts his thesis. He concludes that "Swazi history and tradition have continued to be used to limit the number of women in public life."¹⁷⁹ Of even more significance to this work, Kanduza does not situate his discussion within a

¹⁷⁸Ackson M. Kanduza, "Ambiguities in Women History: The Case of Swaziland," Eastern Africa Social Science Research Review, Vol. XII, 1 (January 1996), 35.

¹⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 44.

theme of patriarchal relations in Swazi society. He also fails to acknowledge the problematic nature of the 'tradition' paradigm in the historiography of Swaziland. Consequently, his work does not provide new insights from what is already known by scholars of Swazi history.

Hilary Standing, like Kanduza, provides a brief review of literature regarding the study of women in Swaziland, though from a non-historian's perspective. She correctly observes that most of the studies on women in Swaziland are done within the framework of "women and development" literature, which generally lumps all women in an undifferentiated whole. She points out that "any analysis of gender relations in contemporary Swaziland needs to start from some understanding of the degree and significance of commoditisation in the Swazi economy, and from an appreciation that it is not necessary to posit the existence of a 'pure' proletariat."¹⁸⁰ In short, Standing advocates a nuanced study of women at the workplace, which takes into account differentiation in women's choices. In this sense, she still leaves politics outside of what she perceives as a research agenda in Swaziland. This scholarly neglect of the role of women in politics is not justifiable, since we know that women have and still play a significant part in royal

¹⁸⁰Hilary Standing, "Gender Relations and Social Transformation in Swaziland: Some Comments on Future Research Possibilities," in Michael Neocosmos, ed., Social Relations in Rural Swaziland: Critical Analyses (University of Swaziland: Social Science Research Unit, 1987), p.132. For an example of works which examine Swazi women within a development paradigm, see Christine Roach and Carolyn Sachs, "Swazi Women Farmers: Roles and Responsibilities in Agricultural Production Systems" (Occasional Paper Series: Women in Development, Vol. IV, 1984. Paper written for the South-East Consortium for International Development - SECID, Washington, D.C.), pp. 1-87, and Alice Kavanaugh Armstrong and Ronald Thandabantu Nhlapo, Law and the other Sex: The Legal Position of women in Swaziland (Mbabane, Swaziland: Webster, 1985).

politics.¹⁸¹ Swazi women are also a significant aspect in the development of patriarchy in the country.

P.J. Derman applied an anthropological perspective in his study of the accumulation and distribution of wealth in cattle by the Swazi aristocracy. He identified the institution of marriage as not only central to the distribution of wealth within the aristocratic group, but also as having political implications in uniting this group.¹⁸²

Derman's work is useful to my work, especially for chapter two. However, it neither addresses the colonial situation in Swaziland, nor the theme of power relations, aspects with which my dissertation is concerned.

Other scholars have focused on the integration of women as workers into a capitalist work force. Patricia McFadden has analyzed the proletarianization of women in Swaziland, especially into the capitalist agricultural sector. She points out that women suffer from discrimination at the work-place mainly because they are women. She advocates the liberation of women through mobilizing them as a working class. She argues that women's liberation in Swaziland is a precondition for fundamental changes in Swazi society.¹⁸³ By so doing, she broadens the field of labor history, which has received

¹⁸¹The neglect of a theme on women in politics in the historiography of Swaziland makes Swaziland scholarship to fall behind that of her 'traditional' sister countries: Lesotho and Botswana. Scholars in these two latter countries have begun works on women in politics. For example, see Marc Epprecht, "Women's 'Conservatism' and the Politics of Gender in Late Colonial Lesotho," *Journal of African History*, 36 (1995), 29-56.

¹⁸²P.J. Derman, "Stock and Aristocracy: The Political Implications of the Swazi Marriage," *African Studies*, 36, 2 (1977), 119-129.

¹⁸³Patricia McFadden, "Women and Revolution," in John Daniel and Michael F. Stephen, eds. *Perspectives*, pp. 153-60.

a considerable scholarly attention in the history of Swaziland, and has so far focused largely on men. And yet, McFadden misses an important area in bringing about changes in a society, namely, the role of politics. A meaningful change in the Swazi society ought to address the position of women in Swazi politics. Miranda C. Miles, for her part, has examined Swazi women as migrant workers to South Africa from 1920 to 1970. Miles' work adds a dimension of women as migrant laborers to an existing historiography of Swazi men as migrant laborers in the South African mines.¹⁸⁴ Miles' work is based on a geography perspective and falls within the confines of migration and labor themes. Similarly, Miranda's work is silent on politics and women in Swaziland. Thus the absence of scholarly works on women in politics in Swaziland shows the extent to which the historiography of that country still trails behind international trends in scholarship which address issues of gender both in Africa and the world over.

The story of Labotsibeni's involvement in the history of Swaziland has and still is attracting the attention of observers and scholars alike. And yet there is not a systematic study on her political career. Early European writers either cast her in a prejudicial manner, for they perceived her and the Swazi culture in general as obstacles to their work

¹⁸⁴Miranda C. Miles, "Missing Women: A Study of Swazi Female Migration to the Witwatersrand, 1920-1970" (MA thesis, Kingston: Queen's University, July 1991). For works on Swazi men as migrant workers, see Jonathan Crush, The Struggle for Swazi Labour, 1890-1920 (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), and F. de Vletter, in collaboration with M.H. Doran, A.R.C. Low, F.D. Prinz and B.D. Rosen-Prinz, "Labour Migration in Swaziland," in W.R. Bohning, ed., Black Migration to South Africa: A Selection of Policy-Oriented Research (Geneva: ILO, 1981), pp. 45-89.

in Swaziland, or focused their attention to describing her physical features.¹⁸⁵ The Swazi royalists' interests in the work of Labotsibeni reveal this group's concern with matters of genealogy with the Swazi aristocracy. This kind of concern is aimed at establishing an aristocracy's legitimacy in occupying a certain position within the Swazi ruling aristocracy. Therefore, it ought not be treated as a historical analysis of, for our purpose, Labotsibeni's contribution to the history of Swaziland.¹⁸⁶ Scholars, for their part, have either lumped Labotsibeni together with other Swazi leaders without making a distinction of her individual contribution to the history of Swaziland, or they have presented her biographical sketch with anecdotal information of what she did during her life-time.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵For this view, see for instance a work by one of the early missionaries in Swaziland, C.C. Watts, Dawn in Swaziland (Westminster: The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1922), and for physical descriptions, see P. O'Neil, Adventures in Swaziland (New York: , 1921), p.

¹⁸⁶For this royalist view, see for example, Prince Arthur Magangeni Dlamini, "Brief Points on the History of Gwamile." Prince Dlamini works at the National Treasury Office, Lobamba, Swaziland. I had occasional conversations with him on Labotsibeni in August 1996, during my fieldwork in Swaziland. It was during this time that he gave me his rough notes on Labotsibeni and I am greatly indebted to him for sharing his notes with me and for the time he spent talking with me about my work. My sincere thanks also go to Sibongile Nxumalo, an archivist at the Swazi National Archives, for agreeing to graciously introduce me to Prince Dlamini. Without her introduction, I very much doubt that I would have been able to secure any appointment with Dlamini. Prince Dlamini's notes are, however, of less value to the study of Labotsibeni, except as far as they establish her genealogy. In fact, scholars of Swazi history may find Jones, Register, a far better source than Dlamini's notes.

¹⁸⁷For a view of lumping Labotsibeni together with other Swazi leaders, see Balam Nyeko, "Pre-nationalist Resitance to Colonial Rule: Swaziland on the Eve of the Imposition of British Administration, 1890-1902" (a copy of this paper is located in the Special Collection, Library, University of Swaziland. The copy has no date.), pp. 1-9; Balam Nyeko, "African Initiatives and Responses in Colonial Swaziland: The Swazi Leaders and the Land Question, 1902-26," Paper presented to the International Conference on Southern African History at the National University of Lesotho, Roma, 1st-7th August, 1977, pp. 2-12. (Copy of this paper is available at the University of

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An anthropologist, who has written extensively on Swaziland, has made this observed regarding Labotsibeni, "events of her early life are among the essentials of Sobhuza's [II] story and are recounted by him on many occasions."¹⁸⁸ This remark does not only subsume Labotsibeni's contribution under a male figure, a king, but it also conceptually deprives her of her independent historical moment in the history of Swaziland. Here therefore, we have an example of what scholars of women's and gender studies have drawn our attention to, regarding reasons for the invisibility of women in history.¹⁸⁹ In their sum, the above-mentioned approaches on Labotsibeni have left us with a largely incomplete history of her role, in spite of the fact that she was one of the main players in the history of Swaziland from 1890 until her death in 1925. Even worse, some of these scholars have relegated Labotsibeni to the status of "a power behind the scenes."¹⁹⁰ Henceforth, this view of Labotsibeni as "a power behind the scenes" has been uncritically

Swaziland, Library, Specially Collection.). For the second view of presenting biographical sketches of Labotsibeni, see Ackson M. Kanduza, "Labotsibeni Gwamile LaMdluli (or LaMvelasi), c. 1858-1925," n.d., pp. 1-15. (I am indebted to Kanduza for sharing this paper with me in 1996 when I went to Swaziland for my fieldwork.) See also Thoko Ginindza, "Labotsibeni/Gwamile Mdluli: The Power Behind the Swazi Throne, 1875-1925," in Flora Edouwaye S. Kaplan, ed. Queens, Queen Mothers, Priestesses, and Power: Case Studies in African Gender (New York: Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, Vol. 810, 1997), 135-158. Kanduza and Ginindza rely heavily on Hilda Kuper, Sobhuza II Ngwenyama and King of Swaziland: The Story of an Hereditary Ruler and his Country (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1978), in their reconstruction of Labotsibeni's history.

¹⁸⁸Kuper, Sobhuza II, p.18. Ginindza quotes this statement from Kuper. See Ginindza, "Labotsibeni," in Kaplan, ed. Queens, p. 136.

¹⁸⁹For a discussion of this point, see Helen Bradford, "Women, Gender and Colonialism: Rethinking the History of the British Cape Colony and Its Frontier Zones, c. 1806-70," Journal of African History, 37 (1996), 351-370.

¹⁹⁰Kuper, Sobhuza II, p.18.

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accepted and perpetuated by some scholars of Swazi history.¹⁹¹ Thoko Ginindza has in fact provided a summary of Labotsibeni's highlights as preserved by Swazi bards (oral historians) in Labotsibeni's *tibongo* (praises), and they have been discussed by Hilda Kuper.¹⁹²

Hamilton Sipho Simelane provides an good work on Swazi resistance to Transvaal administration from 1881 to 1898. He shows that Queen Regent Tibati Nkambule and Queen Mother Labotsibeni were in the forefront of such a resistance. His work is a useful source in the reconstruction of power relations between Swazi leaders and Europeans in the turn of the century in Swaziland.¹⁹³ However, Simelane approaches his subject from a perspective of resistance literature. He fails to notice that Swaziland was a completely colonized country by 1895. This failure leads him to explore the events of 1881 to 1898 without taking into account the colonial context. Thus to him, Bhunu is still a 'king' of Swaziland. This is an indication of the elusiveness of the nature of colonialism in the historiography of Swaziland.

Alan R. Booth has identified Labotsibeni as one of the figures who merits consideration for biographical studies in Swaziland.¹⁹⁴ My dissertation attempts to

¹⁹¹See, for instance, Ginindza's subtitle in her work, "Labotsibeni/Gwamile Mdluli: The Power Behind the Swazi Throne, 1875-1925," in Kaplan, ed., Queens, p. 135, and Kanduza, "Labotsibeni," p. 9.

¹⁹²See Ginindza, "Labotsibeni," in Kaplan, ed., Queens, pp. 135-158.

¹⁹³Hamilton Sipho Simelane, "Swazi Resistance to Boer Penetration and Domination, 1881-1898," Transafrican Journal of History, 18 (1989), 117-146.

¹⁹⁴Alan R. Booth, "Priorities and Opportunities for Research in Swaziland," History in Africa, 9 (1982), 325-335. This article might be of use to scholars who are new to the history of Swaziland, for Booth identifies various research topics for historians.

provide a starting point for such a work on Labotsibeni, though I make no claims to be writing her biography. Such a task still awaits scholars who would have access to the oral sources with first hand knowledge of Labotsibeni.

One minor point on the historiography of Swaziland merits a remark: dates. The precolonial Swazi history is bedeviled by lack of scholarly consensus on exactly when did events happen. For example, the month of King Mbandzeni's death varies from scholar to scholar. Others mention it as February 1889, while to some it was October 1889.¹⁹⁵ Also in the case of Labotsibeni there are is a conflict in dates. Some scholars mention that she and her son Bhunu were 'shown' to the public as the new heads of state on June 3, 1890, while others mention that it was September 3, 1890.¹⁹⁶ Although the writing of history is not merely concerned with establishing the accuracy of dates, it is important that factual information such as when events occurred be agreed upon, and scholars could differ on their interpretations and emphasis on why, how and on other general areas of disagreement among historians with regard to their reconstruction of the historical narrative. Thus the chronology of events or their dates becomes significant as well as the reconstruction and interpretation of the events themselves. Problems of chronology, especially as pertaining to the precolonial history have long been observed and attended to elsewhere by scholars of African history.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵For February, see Nyeko, "Pre-Nationalist Resistance to Colonial Rule," p. 10, and his dissertation, "Swazi Leadership," p. 61; for October, see Bonner, Kings, p.195, Jones, Register, p.122 and Matsebula, History, p.122.

¹⁹⁶See Matsebula, History, p. 149 and Kuper, Sobhuza II, p. 26, respectively.

¹⁹⁷For example, see D.H. Jones, "Problems of African Chronology," JAH, XI, 2 (1970), 161-176; D.W. Cohen, "A Survey of Interlacustrine Chronology," JAH, XI, 2 (1970),

Significance of this Study

In the above literature review I have attempted to talk broadly about the sources of this dissertation, its methodology, to explain and situate its title within the fields of gender and power relations, to establish the strengths and weaknesses of the literature both in general and specific to Swaziland, which is the area of research. The insights I gained from the literature review help toward my efforts to distill the data from both primary and secondary sources. I have identified gaps and biases in the historiography of Swaziland.

Therefore, this work attempts to address one of these lacunae, namely the history of gender and power in precolonial and early colonial Swaziland. I argue that unlike many African situations, European colonialism came to Swaziland through a complex system of negotiations, negotiations which were fraught with distortions and contestations. Since Swaziland was never conquered militarily by both its colonial powers: the Boers of the Transvaal Republic and the British, it provides an ideal context for the study of power relations at political and at interstate levels. To understand how Swaziland was colonized and the nature of such colonialism, I suggest that we approach the topic through the concept of power relations. This concept illuminates our

177-201; Edward E. Alpers, "Dynasties of the Mutapa-Rozi Complex," *JAH*, XI, 2 (1970), 203-220; Andrew Roberts, "Chronology of the Bemba (N.E. Zambia)," *JAH*, XI, 2 (1970), 221-240; Gladwyn Murray Childs, "The Chronology of the Ovimbundu Kingdoms," *JAH*, XI, 2 (1970), 241-248; E.M. Chilver and P.M. Kaberry, "Chronology of the Bamenda Grassfields," *JAH*, XI, 2 (1970), 249-257, and Colin Flight, "The Chronology of the Kings and Queen Mothers of Bono-Manso: A Revaluation of the Evidence," *JAH*, XI, 2 (1970), 259-268.

understanding of the motives and goals which lay behind political contestations between the local power elites and the colonizing power when European colonialism was established. I will argue in subsequent chapters of this work that the Swazi leaders' first and foremost concern in their dealing with European colonialism was to make sure that they did not lose their precolonial privileged position as power elites over their subjects. The perspective of power relations also enables us to notice variations in the way European powers imposed colonial rule in Africa and elsewhere. It also broadens our understanding of the nature and processes of colonial rule. For example, instead of only viewing the customary law, as legal scholars are claiming, as the negotiated law by both the local elites and colonial officials, we will begin to perceive political power in a colonial context as a negotiated instrument, especially in situations where military conquest was absent.

I, like D.A. Low in his study of the establishment of colonial rule in Buganda, do not find the notion of indirect rule useful in this study of the imposition and administration of colonial rule in Swaziland.¹⁹⁸ The notion of indirect rule obscures any possibilities that local rulers were self-conscious, and had their own agendas which they pursued within the context of European colonial rule. Rather than perceiving local elites as having been used by a colonial state in its indirect rule, I suggest that we begin to view them as people with their own agendas, especially including a desire to continue to wield power over their precolonial constituencies. The emphasis on indirect rule also

¹⁹⁸For Low's view on this point, see Low, "Lion Rampant," Political Studies, 235-252.

misleadingly conveys a sense of legitimacy of the colonial order in the eyes of the colonized. In the case of Swaziland, as this work will show, the colonial authorities had also always competed with the precolonial Swazi authorities for legitimacy from the eyes of the emaSwati. For example, no colonial authority had ever received the time-honored Swazi royal salute - *Bayete*, which was reserved for Swazi royalists. This had surprised most British officials in Swaziland who had anticipated that the British royal family Edward, Prince of Wales and his Mother, the British Queen, would be given such a salute by the emaSwati during their visit to Swaziland on June 14, 1925. To the utter surprise and probably disgust, after the British royal family met with the Swazi royal family in Sobhuza II's presence, the Swazi regiments "boomed *Bayete* [only to the Swazi royalists], and court bards recited the great deeds of his (Sobhuza's) forebears."¹⁹⁹ At another event in May 1926 where the British Resident Commissioner (R.C) met with Sobhuza II and his Councillors, the former was told by one of the councillors Mhupi that "the Paramount Chief was as import [sic] man as the Resident Commissioner in Swaziland. The R.C. asked him what he meant. Mhupi said he meant as far as the Swazies were concerned."²⁰⁰ Of course, it was a different story for some of the societies which were subjected to military conquest by a colonizing power. For example, other scholars claim that when Cecil John Rhodes, the British who conquered Southern Rhodesia (present-day

¹⁹⁹Kuper, *Sobhuza II*, p. 91.

²⁰⁰Resident Commissioner (Swaziland 1926) Speech Judgement in the case of Sobhuza II vs Miller and the Swaziland Corporation - read to the Paramount Chief and about 200 head-men on May 17th, 1926 (J.S.M. Matsebula Collection, Special Collection, University of Swaziland), p. 2.

Zimbabwe) in 1890, died in 1902 he received a precolonial Ndebele royal salute *Bayete* from three thousand Ndebele as his coffin was being lowered into his grave.²⁰¹ I suggest that it ought to be treated as an exception rather than the rule for colonized people to show such an allegiance or a respect to a European colonizer. This case, probably resulted from the nature of the precolonial power relations in Southern Rhodesia and the way the European power inserted itself in such power relations.²⁰² However, for Low, the Ndebele salute to Rhodes' corpse signifies that "the last paramount chief of the Ndebele was thus, as it seems to me, in a very real sense, not Lobengula, but Rhodes; and in the thinking of the Ndebele it seems to have been this white man who, for all that he had done to them, had succeeded by right of conquest...to political authority over them."²⁰³ The Swazi case differs from the Ndebele, because the former did not experience military conquest by any European power. Therefore the Swazi military power never witnessed a European conquest with its humiliating features on the Swazi leaders. Hence in the eyes of most of the emaSwati and their regiments the Swazi leaders retained power or its semblance which made it not easy for legitimacy to be transferred to the colonial authorities. In spite of the British military conquest in 1879, and the exiling of the last king of the AmaZulu in Zululand, Natal, King Dinuzulu in 1907 by the British and his subsequent death in exile 1913, his son Solomon ka Dinuzulu had refused to render a royal salute, *Bayete* to the British Governor-General of South Africa, the Early of

²⁰¹ MacDonald, *Language*, p.139, and Low, "Lion Rampant," *Political Studies*, 237.

²⁰² A useful work for such a starting points is David Beach, *The Shona and their Neighbours* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1994).

²⁰³ Low, "Lion Rampant," *Political Studies*, 237.

Athlone, during his visit to Eshowe, Zululand on June 24, 1930.²⁰⁴ Thus even in places where colonialism was imposed through conquest, the colonized subjects refused to give legitimacy to the colonial state.²⁰⁵

My work is different from the existing works on the history of Swaziland. I do not take off from the subjects which Hilda Kuper has investigated as points of my departure. I start my work from an understanding that the Dlamini hegemony in Swaziland was established through conquest of the local populations, who even retained an identification of being *Emakhandzambili*, 'those found ahead' long after they had been subjugated by the Dlamini clan. This distinction not only serves as a label to denote the conquered subjects from those known as *Bemdzabuko*, the 'true Swazi,' a group from which the Dlamini kings descended, but it ensured that the royal throne (source of political power) remained within the conquering group. This starting point allows us to understand why the Dlamini kings of Swaziland entered into alliances with Europeans against other African states during the time of colonization of southern Africa. This position also helps us to break away from what I perceive as the Machievallian approach to the historiography of Swaziland, that is, once the Dlamini clan had established its power base in what later became Swaziland, historians had taken that clan and its hegemony as a

²⁰⁴Shula Marks, The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 18.

²⁰⁵ Recently scholars have explored the complexities pertaining to the issue of rendering legitimacy to the colonial state by the colonized people in Africa and India. See, for example, a collection of essays in Dagmar Engels and Shula Marks, eds., Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and Society in Africa and India (New York: British Academic Press, 1994).

priori. However, by viewing the Dlamini aristocracy as colonizers of the area which became named after their leader, then we could begin to understand their motives for collaborating with the Transvaal Boers and the British, who were colonizers like them in southern African. This point becomes pertinent if one considers that the Dlamini clan arrived in Swaziland about the 1770s, whereas the Dutch, who latter referred to themselves as the Afrikaners, had arrived in the Cape (South Africa) in 1652, and the British in 1795 for a temporary period and then returned in the early nineteenth-century to establish their colonial rule in the Cape. Therefore, here lies a recipe for co-operation among these powers in establishing their power bases in the region. A history of Swaziland which focuses on power relations between the emaSwati and the Europeans, who established their colonial rule in the country, ought to take into account the fact that the Dlamini power was itself a colonial power, which had conquered the inhabitants of the area. To neglect this point would mean a writing of such a history from a mid-stream position. In other words, the historiography of European colonial rule in Africa in general ought to take into account the precolonial history, for it to be informative.

Most scholars of the history of Swaziland have commented on the domination of the country by South Africa. Others have even referred to Swaziland as a South African 'bantustan.' Yet, none have traced in a systematic way the historical development of the relations of these two countries. This work throws some light on how such relations developed over time.

My work also differs from others on Swaziland in that it employs gender analysis in its study of politics. By so doing, I show that at certain times, especially during the

minority of a king, Swazi politics was presided over by a woman in her capacity as queen-regent. However, I do argue that even at such times, in general the queen-regents did not push for an agenda which would bring more women to the center of Swazi politics. The majority of the queen-regents and queen-mothers were concerned with maintaining the status quo.

But, an important lesson which comes from studying Swazi politics during the era of queen-mother and queen-regent Labotsibeni, is that some women leaders just like other men leaders equally demonstrated a feeling of nationalism against the European colonial powers when the latter were imposing their colonial rule. Therefore, it could be argued that the postcolonial political leadership in Africa, which is largely male, reveals the manner by which the colonial state, which was predominantly administered by European males forged an alliance with African males who succeeded them to the political office in a postcolonial state at the expense of women who used to have some semblance of, if not really political power in precolonial times. In her study of how Igbo women lost political power in colonial Nigeria, Judith Van Allen suggests that "the dominant view among British colonial officers and missionaries was that politics was a man's concern. Socialized in Victorian England, they had internalized a set of values and attitudes about what they considered to be the natural and proper role of women that supported this belief."²⁰⁶ Therefore, it could be argued that this value also gave rise to the postcolonial state in Africa, which is a legacy of colonialism, where the European

²⁰⁶Van Allen, "Sitting on a Man," 165-166.

colonial powers had passed over the political power to African men. With this a done deal in a postcolonial state, Van Allen observes that thereafter even scholars did not bother to find out “Whatever happened to Igbo women's organization?”²⁰⁷ But, in the case of Swaziland, queen Labotsibeni did not completely lose her precolonial political power, and yet scholars have so far neglected to examine Swazi politics in her era.

In this work I draw insights liberally from other disciplines such as political science and anthropology. Consequently, the final product has a multi-disciplinary flavor. I consider this as a strength of this dissertation as well as a challenge when one attempts to cross disciplinary boundaries in an attempt to reconstruct the historical past. The discipline of history stands to benefit from crossing disciplinary borders, for as a discipline, history still lacks well articulated theoretical frameworks within which its practitioners could situate their research findings. Thus, until such a time that history could develop its own theories, historians must continue to look elsewhere for analytical tools. I share similar sentiments with other scholars such as Sudipta Kaviraji who recently urged historians to look beyond their discipline for theoretical insights which would permit them to generalize their findings.²⁰⁸

I have organized this dissertation thematically. In chapter two I examine the coming of the Dlamini aristocracy to what later became known as Swaziland and the development of patriarchy in precolonial Swazi society. Chapter three sets the stage for

²⁰⁷*Ibid.*, 166.

²⁰⁸Sudipta Kaviraj, “On the construction of colonial power: structure, discourse, hegemony,” in Dagmar Engels and Shula Marks, eds., Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and Society in Africa and India (New York: British Academic Press, 1994), p.19.

understanding Labotsibeni's role in Swazi politics. It does this by analyzing the creation and the function of the institution of the queen-mother and queen-regents in Swazi politics. Chapter four discusses the background of the Swazi-Anglo-Boer relations. Chapter five deals with Swazi queens' taking over the political reigns of the monarchy and the Anglo-Transvaal governments' colonization of Swaziland. Chapter six deals with the Swazi attempts to forestall the imposition of colonial rule in Swaziland by the governments of Britain and Transvaal. Chapter seven explores the impact of the South African War, 1899-1902 on the affairs of Swaziland. Chapter eight examines the Swazi experience of the early phase the British colonial rule. Chapter nine is conclusion of this study and it discusses Labotsibeni's legacy and the nature of colonialism in Swaziland.

Chapter Two

LAND, PEOPLE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PATRIARCHY

This chapter presents an overview of the early history of Swaziland until the nineteenth-century. It relates issues of power relations to the establishment of the Swazi state during the 1820s, and emphasizes state formation as a result of the Dlamini clan's¹

¹Recently scholars have attempted to redefine the concept clan in their attempts to understand the process involved in construction and reconstruction of lineages in African societies. My usage of this term in work is informed by such definitions. Jean Davison provides the most recent synthesis on the scholarly discussion of the term clan. Among others, she cites a Ugandan sociologist E.D. Mwamula-Lubandi, who points out that "clan refers to a common descent group through which organizing relations are identified and maintained. But clan also has symbolic capital in the form of ancestral names, totems, and 'other clan-formation criteria' that reinforce one another to keep 'the essence of clan identity alive and operating.'" Davison also cites the historian David Newbury, who argues that no "clear and consistent definition of clan' is possible because as a cultural unit clan is a historically derived construction." Newbury postulates that "clan identities and the actions based on them (are) individual social constructs, each formed under its own specific conditions and fully capable of changing, rather than ... primordial givens." For a fuller discussion of these theories of clan, see Jean Davison, Gender, Lineage, and Ethnicity in Southern Africa (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997), pp. 10-15. Newbury's views are based on his study of kings and clans elsewhere in Africa, see David Newbury, Kings and Clans: Ijwi Island and the Lake Kivu Rift, 1780-1840 (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991). In the case of Swaziland, the concept clan was given scholarly authority by an anthropologist Hilda Kuper, Aristocracy. Since then most Swazi historians and their students have employed the term clan in their conceptualization of the history of Swaziland. See for example, Bonginkosi B. Sikhondze, "The Birth of the Mamba Clan of Swaziland" (unpublished paper, University of Swaziland: Social Science Research Unit, n.d.), pp.1-36; Rotter Sicheme Mamba, "A History of the Mamba Kingdom: The Unknown Aspect of the Swazi History" (B.A. thesis, University of Swaziland, May 1985), Tshengisile Leocardia Matsebula, "The History of the Matsebula Clan" (B.A. thesis, University of Swaziland, May 1993), and Ngwenyendela Shongwe, "'BakaShongwe' - (The Shongwes) As Recited to Joseph Mamba," *Ngadla! A History Society Journal of U.B.S. (UCS)*, vol. 1, 1 (1976), 16-18.

conquest of the earlier inhabitants of present-day Swaziland in the second half of the eighteenth-century. At the same time, I recast earlier accounts of the conquering African aristocracy,² by tracing the development of patriarchy in precolonial Swaziland.³ Thus, the theme of gender relations as a social category is central to this discussion.

Present-day Swaziland is situated between South Africa and Mozambique in southern Africa. On the South African side Swaziland shares its northern and western borders with Mpumalanga Province and its south and south-eastern border with KwaZulu-Natal Province. Its eastern border is the Lubombo Mountains which it shares with Mozambique. Swaziland has four topographical features that influence its climate, socio-economic development and political settlement. On the west is the highveld which is located above 1000 meters; whereas the east has a middleveld averaging about 700

²See Hilda Kuper, An Africa Aristocracy: Rank Among the Swazi (London: Oxford University Press, 1947, reprinted 1965), Philip Bonner, "Early State Formation among the Nguni: The Relevance of the Swazi Case," African History Seminar Paper (University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies Institute of Commonwealth Studies, January 1978. Copy of this paper obtained at the University of Swaziland: Social Science Research Unit), pp. 1-15, and Arthur Magagula Dlamini, "Expansion and Survival Policy of the Swazi Nation," (University of Swaziland: Social Science Research Unit, n.d.), pp. 1-7. Unlike these scholars, Huw M. Jones perceives the establishment of the Dlamini group in Swaziland as a colonial settlement. For a discussion of this view, see Huw M. Jones, "The Pre-Colonial Distribution of the Swazi Population" (unpublished paper, 1981, pp. 1-35), in J.S.M. Matsebula Collection, Special Collection, University of Swaziland. For a brief overview of the pre-Dlamini conquest inhabitants of Swaziland, see J.R. Masson, "First Inhabitants of Swaziland" (unpublished paper, 11-4-1975, pp.1-3), in J.S.M. Matsebula Collection, University of Swaziland.

³See explanation of patriarchy below, p. 6.

meters in altitude, the lowveld averages about 400 meters, and the Lubombo mountains region 600 - 900 meters. Average rainfall is greater on the highveld than on the lowveld. This topography influences human and livestock settlement in Swaziland in precolonial and colonial times.⁴

Swaziland is about 6,000 sq. miles in size and one of the smallest countries in Africa. It was not the size of Swaziland that was significant to Europeans (the British and Transvaal Boers), but its mineral wealth, fertile soil and strategic position as a gateway to Delagoa Bay for the land locked nineteenth-century Transvaal Boer Republic. These attributes culminated in the concessionary era, which brought about an influx of Europeans to the country, and in Swaziland's becoming a wild card in British-Boer geopolitics during the last two decades of the nineteenth-century.⁵ In December 1894

⁴Dorothy M. Doveton, The Human Geography of Swaziland (London: George Philip & Son, 1937), chapter II, Randall M. Packard, "Maize, Cattle and Mosquitoes: The Political Economy of Malaria epidemics in Colonial Swaziland," in John Daniel and Michael F. Stephen, eds., Historical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Swaziland: Selected Articles (Social Science Research Unit: University of Swaziland, 1986), pp. 79-80. See also Jonathan Crush, The Struggle for Swazi Labour, 1890-1920 (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), pp. 14-16.

⁵For a discussion of concessions see Philip Bonner, Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires: The evolution and dissolution of the nineteenth-century Swazi state (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983). For strategic significance see Noel George Garson, "The Swaziland Question and a Road to the Sea, 1887-1895," Archives Year Book for South African History, Vol. II. Pretoria: Government Printer, 1957), 267-434. For establishment of colonial rule in Swaziland see Manelisi Genge, "Law and the Imposition of Colonial Rule in Swaziland, 1890-1898" (MA thesis, Ohio University, 1992) and F.J. Mashasha, "The Road to Colonialism: Concessions and the Collapse of Swazi Independence 1875-1926" (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1977).

Britain and the South African Republic (Transvaal) declared Swaziland "a protected dependency" administered by the latter.⁶ In 1903 after the South African War, 1899-1902 (formerly referred to as the Anglo-Boer War) Britain took over Swaziland from the South African Republic. Swaziland was classified with Basutoland (Lesotho), and Bechuanaland as High Commission Territories, or 'Protectorates,' a misleading label;⁷ white - settler control of land in colonial Swaziland had closer parallels with settler - dominated Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South Africa than with its two sister High Commission Territories. Just as in the British settler colony of Southern Rhodesia, British and Transvaal Boer capitalists who had invested in mining and agriculture dominated the colonial economy of Swaziland.⁸ Swaziland became independent from Britain in September 1968, as a kingdom ruled by King Sobhuza II, whose grandmother Queen Regent Labotsibeni had preserved the Swazi throne during her reign as Queen

⁶Genge, "Law," pp. 86-87.

⁷See Richard P. Stevens, Lesotho, Botswana, & Swaziland: The Former High Commission Territories in Southern Africa (London: Pall Mall Press, 1967); Jack Halpern, South Africa's Hostages: Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland (London: Penguin Books, 1965), and for the misnomer, see Ronald Hyam, The Failure of South African Expansion, 1908-1948 (London: Macmillan, 1972), p. 1.

⁸Alan R. Booth, Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983), p. , M.G. Hodgson and W.G. Ballinger, "Swaziland" (A410 A3 Ballinger Papers, Historical and Literary Papers Division, The University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1931), p.1, and Doveton, Geography, p. 2. For the Southern Rhodesia see Elizabeth Schmidt, "Patriarchy, Capitalism, and the Colonial State in Zimbabwe," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 16, 4 (1991), 732.

Regent from 1899 to 1921.

Early History of Swaziland

The modern Swazi state emerged from the socio-economic and political upheavals, the so-called '*Mfecane*,'⁹ of the early nineteenth-century, that brought about mass migrations and refashioning of regional nation-states in southern Africa. Like Moshoeshoe's Basutoland (Lesotho¹⁰), after these upheavals the Swazi state became identifiable with an individual, King Mswati II, who ruled from 1826 to 1865. Similar to other African states which emerged from the era of the so-called "*Mfecane*," the Swazi state got its present name from Europeans who referred to Mswati's territory as Swaziland.¹¹ Henceforth, what had previously been referred to by local people as

⁹The events related to this so-called '*Mfecane*' phase of the South African history have recently become a subject of debate among South Africanist historians. For this debate, see a collection of essays in Carolyn Hamilton, ed., The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995). For an argument which triggered this debate, see Julian Cobbing, "The Mfecane as Alibi: Thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolompo," JAH, 29 (1988), 487-519.

¹⁰For the precarious socio-political atmosphere from which these new states emerged, especially Lesotho see Elizabeth A. Eldredge, A South African Kingdom: The pursuit of security in nineteenth-century Lesotho (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993). For a general history of Swaziland, although these works do not examine the "Mfecane" era, see Bonner, Kings; Booth, Swaziland; J.S.M. Matsebula, A History of Swaziland (Cape Town: Longman, 1972, reprinted in 1987), and Kuper, Aristocracy.

¹¹See Reverend Jackson, "Swaziland and AmaSwazi," annexure A to Sir F. De Winton, "Report on Swaziland," in Command Paper 6201 (London: HMSO, 1890), p.19.

Ngwane, and the inhabitants, AmaNgwane, became known as Swaziland and people emaSwati. Thus, the arrival of Europeans in southern Africa brought about the renaming of places and people. This was in itself an indication of later disposition of power relations, because the naming of objects is symbolic of domination.

But in some respects, the early history of Swaziland differs from that of Lesotho, where "independent BaSotho chiefdoms and other refugees banded together and sought protection under Moshoeshe, who used a strong mountain fortress to protect his people and cattle,"¹² against the upheavals of the '*mfecane*' in the first two decades of the nineteenth-century. In contrast to Lesotho and other states that emerged from the '*mfecane*' disruptions, the Swazi polity was created through conquests by outsiders, in this case of the Sotho inhabitants by a loose configuration of the Dlamini or Ngwane clan from the area of Delagoa Bay.¹³ In this sense, the history of state formation under Dlamini royal resembles that of the Lozi of Barotseland under their King Mulambwa who reigned in about 1780-1830. The Lozi royal family is reported to have come from the

¹²Elizabeth A. Eldredge, "Women in Production: The Economic Role of Women in Nineteenth-Century Lesotho," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 16, 4 (1991), 711.

¹³For a discussion of early inhabitants of Swaziland before conquest by Dlamini clan and others who came with them from the east coast, see J.R. Masson, "First Inhabitants of Swaziland" (unpublished paper in J.S.M. Matsebula Collection, Special Collection, University of Swaziland, date written as 11-4-1975), pp. 1-3, and Huw M. Jones, "The Pre-Colonial Distribution of the Swazi Population" (unpublished paper in Matsebula Collection, 1981), pp. 1-35.

Lunda-Luba empire of the Congo basin in the latter half of the seventeenth-century.¹⁴

Late eighteenth and nineteenth-century Swazi history may be divided into three phases. During the first, the Dlamini or Ngwane clan under the leadership of Ngwane II arrived from Delagoa Bay (in present-day Mozambique) in the 1760s and 1770s.¹⁵ They established themselves in the southern part of present-day Swaziland at a place later known as Shiselweni, north of the Phongola River, by conquering its inhabitants. The second era was that of the Dlamini conquest when, under the leadership of Sobhuza I, who became King in about 1805, the Dlamini clan subjugated various chiefdoms, among them the Sotho clans¹⁶, in the interior and northern parts of Swaziland during the 1820s. Thereafter, King Sobhuza established his headquarters in the Zulwini valley near the Mdzimba Mountains. The third phase witnessed the consolidation of the Swazi state by King Mswati II, who succeeded his father King Sobhuza I in 1826.

¹⁴For the history of Lozi of Barotseland, see Gerald L. Caplan The Elite of Barotseland, 1878-1969: A Political History of Zambia's Western Province (Berkeley: University of California, 1970).

¹⁵The narratives of the Portuguese shipwrecks mention the existence of a King named Angomanes (later identified as amaNgwane, which was the name applied to the amaSwazi before they settled in Swaziland), who settled west of Maputo in about the fourteenth century. See C.R. Boxer, ed., The Tragic History of the Sea, 1589-1622 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1959), pp. 74-75, and J.A. Clement, "Origins of the Swazi Nation," in *The Times of Swaziland*, April 2, 1971, p.10 (Matsebula Collection). See also Christian P. Potholm, Swaziland: The Dynamics of Political Modernization (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 7-8.

¹⁶The original inhabitants of modern Swaziland were the San, who were subjugated by the SeSotho/SePedi speakers in the sixteenth-century. See Booth, Swaziland, p. 7.

There were two distinct categories of people in the emerging Swazi state when Mswati II succeeded to the throne. The people who migrated with the Dlamini clan under Ngwane II's leadership and those who were incorporated into this group at Shiselweni called themselves as *Bantu Baka Ngwane*, meaning "People of Ngwane," or the "true Swazi" or *Bemdzabuko*. This group was mainly composed of the following clans: Mamba, Simelane, Madvonsela, Mabuza, Motsa, Shabalala, Mavimbela, Matsebula, Mdluli and Ngwenya. Mamba, Ginindza, Dvu and Ngwenya were originally names of Dlamini princes' clan. But through a process of fission that resulted from the political development of the Dlamini aristocracy, these princes were granted autonomous status on their own lands within the Swazi state. Upon the granting of autonomous status their names became their sub-clans' *tibongo* (clan name). Thus, in present-day Swaziland one finds such powerful chiefdoms as the Mamba, which was granted autonomy by King Sobhuza I to practice certain semi-royal rituals. Prince Maloyi Mamba (1810s onward) was given this privilege because of some presumed services he rendered to King Sobhuza I.¹⁷ The second category were the *Emakhandzambili* -- "those found ahead," or the Sotho people of the chiefdoms in central and northern Swaziland conquered by Sobhuza I in the 1820s. This group included the following clans: Bembe, Malindza, Gama, Magagula,

¹⁷Kuper, *Aristocracy*, p. 111, and Matsebula, *History*, p. 24. For the history of Mamba, see Sikhondze, "The Birth of the Mamba clan," pp. 1-36, and Mamba, "Mamba Kingdom."

Sifundza, Mnisi, Maseko and Tabetse.¹⁸ It was not until the 1840s that all the people under King Mswati II became known as the emaSwati after a period of military conquest and intermarriage between Dlamini dynasty and its followers from the east, on the one hand and the conquered earlier inhabitants of the area which later became known as Swaziland, on the other. The history of Mswati II's reign has been told elsewhere.¹⁹ That these people were variously known as Ngwane's people, Sobhuza's people and finally emaSwati after Mswati's name indicates the historical development of patriarchy in the Swazi state. A society is patriarchal if it is "*male-dominated, male-identified, and male-centered*."²⁰ Thus Swazi society was patriarchal in the sense that "Swazi political power radiates primarily from the king...[and]...the prosperity of the nation is associated with his

¹⁸Brian Allan Marwick, The Swazi: An Ethnographical Account of the Natives of the Swaziland Protectorate (London: Frank Cass, 1966), p. 2, Kuper, Aristocracy, p. 9, and Bonner, "Factions and Fissions," Journal of African History, XIX, 2 (1978), 222, n7. Sobhuza I, also known as Ngwane IV or Somhlolo, was the son of Ndvungunye, who was the son of Ngwane II.

¹⁹For Mswati II's reign See Matsebula, History, chapter 5; Philip Bonner, "Mswati II c. 1826-65," in Christopher Saunders, ed., Black Leaders in Southern African History (London: Heinemann, 1979), pp. 61-74; Bonner, Kings, chapters 5 & 6. Huw M. Jones, A Biographical Register of Swaziland to 1902 (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1993), p. xx; see also Marwick, The Swazi, p. 7. Bonner, however, dates the term 'Swazi' before Mswati II's reign: see Bonner, "Factions and Fissions," Journal of African History, XIX, 2 (1978), 222, n7.

²⁰Allan G. Johnson, The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), p. 5. Emphasis in the original. The term patriarchy has its origin in Greek where it means the rule of the father in a family, clan or kinship. In the study of gender relations, this term refers to male domination and control of women. It is in this sense that it is used in this work.

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health."²¹ Politics in the Swazi state was and still is patriarchal in the sense that it is centered around the king, not the queen mother or both. The final political authority is that of the king.

Development of Patriarchy in Swazi Society

The early nineteenth-century Swazi state was patriarchal in the sense that its socio-economic-political structure was dominated by and biased in favor of men from its inception. Swazi political structure, marriage alliances, and property ownership and inheritance were significant aspects of patriarchy in the nineteenth-century Swazi state, and will be explored here to illustrate patriarchal relations.

Divergent viewpoints of what constitutes patriarchy include definitions developed in radical feminist, marxist feminist, liberal, and dual-systems theories.²² There is consensus on its central meaning, that is, rule by men or the father in both private and public spheres. Sylvia Walby, one of the leading theorists of patriarchy defines it "as a

²¹ Kuper, Aristocracy, pp. 56 and 85.

²²For a review of such viewpoints see April A. Gordon, Transforming Capitalism and Patriarchy: Gender and Development in Africa (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996), Sylvia Walby, Theorizing Patriarchy (London: Basil Blackwell, 1990), chapter 1; Sharon B. Stichter and Jane L. Parpart, "Introduction: Towards a Materialist Perspective on African Women," in Sharon B. Stichter and Jane L. Parpart, eds., Patriarchy and Class: African Women in the Home and the Workforce (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1988), pp. 1-26, and Kamla Bhasin, What is Patriarchy? (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1993), pp. 20-40.

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system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women." ²³ In using the term "social structure," she refutes biological determinism and the idea that all men dominate and all women are dominated; instead she views patriarchy as a historical phenomenon. On an abstract level patriarchy entails a system of social relations, and on the concrete level consists of six independent but related components. In her construction these are "the patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions."²⁴

This chapter is concerned primarily with the history of patriarchy at the state level and with emphasis on politics. This work uses the concept of the political arena in its broader sense as encompassing the "spheres in social relations where power relations are generated, institutionalized and used to encourage, control or move people's behaviour, attitudes, beliefs in a specified direction-to control and regulate the distribution of resources."²⁵ Of course, the meaning and nature of politics differ from society to society and from time to time. One political scientist has articulated these variations well: "conceptions of politics reflect the values of those who hold them. In other words,

²³Walby, Theorizing Patriarchy, p. 20.

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵Quoted in Leela Kasturi, "Development, Patriarchy, and Politics: Indian Women in the Political Process, 1947-1992," Occasional Paper No. 25, 1995, p. 5.

definitions of politics are themselves inevitably political."²⁶ This study will show that Swazi politics under traditional and conservative male control reflected patriarchal values.

Unlike private patriarchy, which is concerned with household production, public or state patriarchy is broader in scope, for "while being a site of struggle and not a monolithic entity, the state has a systematic bias towards patriarchal interests in its policies and actions."²⁷ Allan G. Johnson's definition of patriarchy is useful for understanding gender relations in Swaziland. In his view, "a society is patriarchal to the degree that it is *male-dominated*, *male-identified*, and *male-centered*. It also involves as one of its key aspects the oppression of women. Patriarchy is male-dominated in that positions of authority--political, economic, legal, religious, educational, military, domestic-- are generally reserved for men."²⁸ Others amend the feminist definition of patriarchy by pointing out that although men dominate, women develop their own power to counter patriarchy. Therefore, power must be understood as a shared and continuous

²⁶Vicky Randall, Women and Politics: An International Perspective (London: Macmillan Education, 2nd edition, 1987), p. 10.

²⁷Walby, Theorizing Patriarchy, p. 21. For a discussion of private and public patriarchy see *ibid.*, pp. 178-185.

²⁸Johnson, The Gender Knot, p. 5. [Emphasis in the original]. See also Valentine M. Moghadam, ed., Patriarchy and Economic Development: Women's Positions at the End of the Twentieth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), preface.

process instead of an unchanging domination.²⁹ The concept of patriarchy has become an established tool in the field of history.³⁰

Patriarchy theory in the study of African history has to contend with the notions of traditions or customs, polygamy, and chiefly power. 'Traditions' or 'customs' were to a large extent staples in African historiography until Martin Chanock's seminal work on Malawi and Zambia.³¹ Chanock has argued that customary law in postcolonial Africa is a by-product of African law and European law negotiated by African elite men and

²⁹Yesim Arat, The Patriarchal Paradox: Women Politicians in Turkey (London: Associated University Presses, 1989), p. 19.

³⁰For Africa see Schmidt, "Patriarchy, Capitalism, and the Colonial State in Zimbabwe," Signs, 16, 4 (1991), 732-756, Diana Wylie, A Little God: The Twilight of Patriarchy in a Southern African Chiefdom (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1990), Margaret Kinsman, "'Beasts of Burden': The Subordination of Southern Tswana Women, ca. 1800-1840," Journal of Southern African Studies, 10, 1 (October 1983), 39-54, and elsewhere outside Africa see Susan K. Besse, Restructuring Patriarchy: The Modernization of Gender Inequality in Brazil, 1914-1940 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), Elizabeth Dore, "Patriarchy and Private Property in Nicaragua, 1860-1920," in Valentine M. Moghadam, ed., Patriarchy and Economic Development: Women's Positions at the End of the Twentieth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 56-79, Richard P. Saller, Patriarchy, property and death in the Roman family (London: Cambridge University Press, 1994), and E. Bradford Burns, Patriarch and Folk: The Emergence of Nicaragua 1798-1858 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1991).

³¹For the central role of tradition in the historiography of Swaziland see Kuper, Aristocracy; Hilda Kuper, The Swazi: A South African Kingdom (New York: Holt, 1963); Marwick, The Swazi; Potholm, Swaziland; Matsebula, History; Hugh Macmillan, "Swaziland: Decolonization and the Triumph of 'Tradition'," Journal of Modern African Studies, 23, 4 (1985), 643-666, and Booth, Swaziland.

European officials during the colonial era.³² Patriarchy theory provides us with insights to ask fresh questions. Who benefitted from so-called traditions and customs as far as men and women were concerned? When and, more importantly, why did such traditions and customs develop the way they did? How did they affect patriarchal relations and women in general? Whose traditions were they: women's or men's? To be sure, the reasons for the creation, acceptance, and transmission of 'traditions,' i.e., accepted practices and belief concerning social and political relations, are not transparent. In supporting the utility of patriarchy theory I argue that the theory helps to reveal the structures and processes beyond surface appearances.³³ Far from discounting the existence of traditions or customs, I suggest a critical view of them, especially as they affect gender relations. As one scholar argues in the case of nineteenth-century Lesotho, customary law was the instrument - not the reason - for the subordination of women.³⁴

More often than not, traditions are invoked as justifications rather than as neutral rules. In the case of Bechuanaland (Botswana) Diana Wylie observes that Tshekedi Khama, regent of the Ngwato chiefdom from 1926 to 1949, oversaw the transformation of a political system that Max Weber might have referred to as "patriarchal- a type of domination based on strictly personal loyalty to a fatherlike ruler who invokes the

³²Martin Chanock, Law, Custom And Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 4.

³³Dore, "Patriarchy," in Moghadam, ed., Patriarchy, p. 59.

³⁴Eldredge, "Women," Signs, 16, 4 (1991), 728.

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sanctity of tradition to justify his acts."³⁵ This observation applies also to the political system in nineteenth-century Swaziland. A scholar of Swazi legal system asserts that "Swazi law and custom is [sic] above all a matter of subtle nuances and shades of emphasis, adapted to addressing social needs as they arise."³⁶ This statement shows the ambiguities of tradition, and that tradition was not a rigidly-molded rule passed down from generation to generation. It also indicates that what became codified as African customary laws during the colonial era were in fact makeshift arrangements or conduct which were then interpreted by both European colonial officials and African elite men as long-established rules. A certain Swazi Court President opposed codification of Swazi customary law because "the uncertainties of customary law had served the nation well during the colonial era, when a game of hide-and-seek had to be played with the British administration. 'Customary law was *our forest*, always there when we needed to *retreat and regroup*.'"³⁷ Similarly, it could be argued that custom was the patriarchy's forest where gender relations were conceptualized; a panel on Swazi customary law consulted by the Restatement of African Law Project of the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London in 1965, was composed exclusively of men whom we would define

³⁵Wylie, *A Little God*, pp. 4-5.

³⁶Thandabantu Nhlapo, *Marriage and Divorce in Swazi Law and Custom* (Mbabane: Webster, 1992), p. xi.

³⁷Nhlapo, *Marriage*, p. xi. Emphasis added.

as from the patriarchal class.³⁸

Having established the scholarly usage of the concept of patriarchy, I now turn to its relevance in the case of Swaziland, and to how its use could produce a nuanced understanding of the history of that country. Swazi patriarchy at the political level was constituted by the king, princes, chiefs, and the rich or powerful men who had access to political power either by marriage alliances with the Dlamini clan or by being chiefs. After the conquest about 1820s, Sobhuza I did not destroy chiefs of the Sotho clans. Instead he and subsequent kings built their administrative structure on chiefly power and incorporated chiefs from the conquered peoples. From Sobhuza I's time onward the Swazi political structure was presided over by the king and queen mother who shared the highest political office of the land. Then there was an *Iqoqo* or Inner Council composed of a small number of the "wisest men of the nation," the chiefs' *tindvuna* (headmen) and the *tindvuna* of the royal villages, and some commoners. And over the years a *Libandla laka Ngwane* or Swazi National Council developed, whose members were chiefs, headmen, some men of common rank and some members of the Inner Council, princes (*bantfanenkosi*) and grandsons of the king were honorary members. The King

³⁸For a list of the names of these men, see N.N. Rubin, "The Swazi Law of Succession: A Restatement," *Journal of African Law*, Vol. IX, 2 (Summer 1965), 113. For an apparent absence of a woman's voice on subjects of family law, payment of bridewealth, inheritance and widowhood, subjects so central to Swazi women's lives upon marriage, see J.M.A. "Preliminary Notes on Principles of Swazi Customary Law" (Lozitha, 12 December 1967, unpub. typescript), pp. 1-36.

communicated with the public through the Swazi National Council.³⁹ This political structure was the basis of the Swazi patriarchy and its offices were hereditary. It was composed mainly of men with the queen mother as the only woman.

Marriage alliances were the lifeblood of Swazi society. It is in marriage rules that peculiar features of the Swazi system, especially pertaining to creation and perpetuation of patriarchy, are discernible.⁴⁰ Polygynous marriages were prevalent among the royalists (Dlamini or Emalangeni), the rich and individuals with political power. The Swazi patriarchal system at the political level was forged through marriage alliances and rules, which "signal the mechanism by which the Swazi aristocracy actually operates in the field of marriage relations."⁴¹ Swazi patriarchs used marriage alliances to maintain their status and wealth among themselves. Cattle obtained through bridewealth or *lobolo* were a significant component of the patriarchs' wealth. Women of higher status were preferred

³⁹Marwick, The Swazi, pp. 263-267, and Potholm, Swaziland, pp. 22-23. Potholm puts the number of the chiefs in the Liqoqo at between twenty and thirty. See *ibid.*

⁴⁰The evidence from Swazi history supports Elizabeth A. Eldredge's conceptualization of political reproduction through marriage alliances. In the case of nineteenth-century Lesotho, Eldredge has argued that "as wives and sisters, married outside their own chiefdom, women produced and reproduced the regional political order. When they served as 'queens,' that is regents, the wives and mothers of chiefs ensured political succession and the inheritance of political office, reproducing sociopolitical relations by holding a place for the male heir until his coming of age." Elizabeth A. Eldredge, A South African Kingdom: The pursuit of security in nineteenth-century Lesotho (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 127. For a fuller discussion of this by Eldredge, see *ibid.*, chapter 10.

⁴¹Adam Kuper, Wives for cattle: Bridewealth and marriage in Southern Africa (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 95.

for marriage by the aristocracy over those from the commoners' ranks. Marriages that were most desirable were the ones arranged by the bride's parents.⁴² Since polygynists were prevalent among the powerful and rich, such marriages encouraged the reproduction of the class of patriarchs. Elsewhere in Africa scholars have interpreted the "accumulation" of women by royalists "as being one strand in the economic of power and differentiation."⁴³ However, the size of this class was controlled by diminution of status, especially those of the Dlamini clan.⁴⁴

Dlamini kings established hegemony in the Swazi state through marriage alliances both within and beyond its borders, and also through chiefly power. Swazi society was characterized by exogamous patrilineal clans. King Sobhuza I was one of the earliest Swazi kings to use polygyny for political ends and the accumulation of wealth for the Dlamini aristocracy, especially for the royal house, a practice which persists to this day.⁴⁵ For instance, he married Tsandzile, a daughter of Zwide Ndwandwe, ruler of the Ndwandwe clan in the Nongoma area of present-day northern KwaZulu-Natal Province.

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁴³See T.C. McCaskie, "State and Society, Marriage and Adultery: Some Considerations Towards a Social History of Pre-Colonial Asante," Journal of African History, 22 (1981), 494.

⁴⁴See the example of the Mamba clan, above.

⁴⁵For modern-day Swaziland, see Hilda Kuper, Sobhuza II Ngwenyama and King of Swaziland: The Story of an Hereditary Ruler and His Country (London: Duckworth, 1978), pp. 344-345.

Among others, Tsandzile brought with her Veya Msibi, daughter of one of Zwide's *tindvuna* (political or military officers, *indvuna*, singular), as her *inhlanti* (subordinate co-wife).⁴⁶ The Ndwandwe clan had emerged as the most powerful in northern KwaZulu-Natal Province by this time, and Sobhuza's marriage to Tsandzile had a political objective: to cement friendly relations with the state on his southern border. Within Swaziland kings entered into polygynous marriages with the object of connecting themselves with various sections of society. The Swazi kings' marriages to women from the Matsebula and Motsa clans are cases in point. Some of the wives, like the two previously mentioned were significant participants in kingship rituals.

The marriage choices of the Dlamini were significant in forging internal relations with most mighty families, and such families' relations to dominant men from other groups.⁴⁷ In a more general sense, the Dlamini's use of marriage was akin to what took place among kinship societies where men exchanged women through marriage, and by so doing, "the biological family is transcended to create a broader society linking different biological families together."⁴⁸ Thus, this arrangement strengthened patriarchal ties by

⁴⁶Jones, Register, p. 446. It will be recalled that the mother of Sobhuza I's grandfather Ngwane, earliest ruler of the Dlamini clan after they had migrated to Shiselweni in the southern part of Swaziland in about 1770, was a daughter of chief Yaka of the Ndwandwe. See Bonner, Kings, p. 11. *Inhlanti* means a subordinate co-wife. An *inhlanti* was usually a sister or a very close relative of a woman who was publicly acknowledged as a wife. The practice of having an *inhlanti* exists only in Swazi royal circles.

⁴⁷Kuper, Wives, p. 94.

⁴⁸Randall, Women and Politics, p. 33.

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providing men with certain rights over their female kin, rights which were denied to women or to women to exercise on their husbands, namely, the control of female sexuality.⁴⁹ One of the ways by which the Dlamini patriarchs strengthened themselves was by incorporating patriarchs from other clans. Wealthy commoners from humble origins who had many wives were allowed entry into the aristocratic class composed of the king, princes and chiefs by marrying daughters of the aristocracy. And through such daughters who were entitled to the status of main wives, such individuals, i.e., their fathers, acquired the aristocratic status as well as the concrete benefits of the aristocratic class.⁵⁰ For example, the emaSwati usually explain the justification of these benefits in these words:

So-and-so should have rights over a large arable area since his wife is the sister of the chief, or because his father was chief deputy to the previous chief; while the relatively small arable holding of another family [was] easily explained in terms of their being new arrivals in the area, with no close connections with any of the mighty.⁵¹

Granting the status of main wife to daughters of the aristocracy in polygynous marriages was another way of spreading the dominance of the ruling class. This ensured that women from the ruling class always retained their birth privileges, ranks and status.⁵²

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

⁵⁰Kuper, *Aristocracy*, p. 113.

⁵¹Kuper quotes A.J.B Hughes, "Some Swazi Views on Land Tenure," *Africa*, 32 (1962), 265, see Kuper, *Wives*, p. 101.

⁵²It is worth noting that according to Swazi custom a daughter is usually referred to by the name of her father, and the prefix *la* means the daughter of --in the case of the queen

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This is an indication of the importance of patriarchy in the Swazi household or homestead. Swazi kings placed themselves among their subjects by establishing residences for some of their wives all over the kingdom, particularly "at strategic administrative centres."⁵³ Therefore, marriage was the golden thread that held together the class of patriarchs in Swaziland. Elsewhere in Africa other scholars have observed that through marriage alliances men benefitted the most by advancing their social and political status and that "the women were the means for realizing the ends of the transactions [exchanges in marriage by men]."⁵⁴

Like his predecessors, King Mswati II contracted marriages with the daughters of both powerful chiefs and insignificant commoners for political and social reasons. The

regent in the title of this study the name Labotsibeni refers to the daughter of Tsibeni. This is an indication of the dominance of men or patriarchy in the homestead. However, this element of patriarchy falls beyond the scope of this dissertation. I am grateful to Carolyn Hamilton for raising this issue with me. Feminists have pointed out the significance of language in understanding patriarchal relations, especially "its phallo-centredness, its limited binary logic and hierarchies of meaning." See Randall, Women and Politics, p. 34. For decoding patriarchal language, see Louise Gouëffic, Breaking the Patriarchal Code: The Linguistic Basis of Sexual Bias (Manchester, CT: Knowledge, Ideas & Trends, 1996).

⁵³P.J. Derman, "Stock and Aristocracy: The Political Implications of Swazi Marriage," African Studies, 36, 2 (1977), 119. The royal residences in the country also served as useful places for resolving conflicts among the queens by assigning them to such residences, instead of keeping them in one royal palace. Kuper, Aristocracy, 153.

⁵⁴For this, Konde cites G. Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: 'Notes on the Political Economy' of Sex," in R.R. Reiter, ed., Toward and Anthropology of Women (New York, 1975), pp. 157-210. See Emmanuel Konde, "Reconstructing the Political Roles of African Women: A Postrevisionist Paradigm," Working Papers in African Studies, No.161, (Boston University), p.15.

Swazi custom of *ukuqoma* sanctioned him in his position as a king to marry by force any unmarried girl he wished; he had the largest number of wives of any man in the country. Similarly, because of their royal status and wealth the Dlamini princes had many wives. Thus over a period of time the Dlamini clan became the largest grouping and its presence was recognizable throughout the nation.⁵⁵ But, since the Swazi political class was mainly composed of the king, queen mother, the Dlamini princes, chiefs and wealthy men, marriage alliances strengthened the Dlamini patriarchs by bringing to the royal center men from whose households marriages were contracted. Women became the ties or means through which the emerging patriarchal relations were forged.⁵⁶ The role of marriage alliances is significant for understanding the development of patriarchal relations in Swaziland where "the rich and powerful [were] polygynists, and the ties traced through homestead 'mothers'"⁵⁷ were of crucial importance in organizing the social structure.

The royal family also used marriage as a tool to accumulate wealth and to maintain the hierarchy of rank and status. However, unlike other polygynists whose wives generated wealth through agricultural work, the Swazi queens were mainly of

⁵⁵Kuper, *Aristocracy*, p. 17.

⁵⁶The role of marriage in patriarchal relations has been analyzed elsewhere. See Carol Smart, *The Ties That Bind: Law, marriage and the reproduction of patriarchal relations* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984).

⁵⁷Kuper, *Wives*, p. 103.

social and political value to the king by linking him to his subjects, and in so doing served as the tentacles for the extension of royal hegemony and patriarchal relations throughout the Swazi kingdom. The work done by wives in polygynous families was performed by tribute labor from the king's subjects instead of by the queens.⁵⁸ But, in an indirect way, the king accumulated wealth by marrying out his daughters and close relatives to powerful chiefs and wealthy men both inside and outside Swaziland.

In the nineteenth-century Swazi state a man's wealth was measured in terms of cattle, wives, agricultural fields, and hospitality. Lacking any of these a man was considered poor. And put together these attributes determined a man's rank and status. Not only were women subordinate to men, but they were reduced to the status of the commodities that constituted wealth. Cattle were the emaSwati's economic jewel; "cattle," the Swazi saying goes, "are ... the property which establishes us."⁵⁹ The emaSwati went to war for the purpose of obtaining cattle. Cattle were also a prerequisite for obtaining wives.⁶⁰ Although land was regarded as communal property held by the

⁵⁸Kuper, *Aristocracy*, pp. 84-85.

⁵⁹Quoted in Alan Booth, "Homestead, State and Migrant Labour in Colonial Swaziland," in John Daniel and Michael F. Stephen, eds., Historical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Swaziland: Selected Articles (Social Science Research Unit, University of Swaziland, 1986), p. 22. The accumulation of women by the Swazi men as an indication of wealth resembles a similar pursuit by men of the political elite in nineteenth-century Asante state. See McCaskie, "State and Society," *JAH*, 22 (1981), 486-489.

⁶⁰Kuper, *Aristocracy*, pp. 123-24, and 148. The use of cattle for the acquisition of wives or a wife was a wide spread practice by African societies in southern Africa. For a discussion of this point, see Pule Phoofolo, "Epidemics and revolutions: the rinderpest

king for the nation with its usufruct regulated by chiefs, cattle and other livestock were individually owned. In southern Africa, cattle were the most valuable form of property transferable from household to household mainly as bridewealth payments.⁶¹

Although Swazi kings had the largest number of wives in the country, they did not pay bridewealth for their wives,⁶² except for the main wife, upon whom the status of main wife or queen mother was usually bestowed after the death of a king. Even the main wife's bridewealth was not paid directly by the king, but by the nation. And in cases where the main wife was selected after the king's death the bridewealth (*lobolo*) was paid retrospectively. Needless to say the main wife's *lobolo* was the highest in the land; King Sobhuza II's mother Queen Mother Lomawa's *lobolo* was 150 head of cattle paid retrospectively.⁶³ But the fact that even the main wife's bridewealth was not paid directly by the king meant that royal cattle wealth was not transferable to other households as was the case with other families, which paid *lobolo* to the bride's family.

epidemic in late nineteenth-century Southern African," Past and Present, CIII/VIII (1993), 117-118. Phoofolo also provides an insightful discussion of the various uses of cattle by African societies in southern African. See *ibid*, 114-118.

⁶¹Eldredge, Kingdom, p. 139. See also Phoofolo, "Epidemics and revolutions," Past and Present, CIII/VIII (1993), 116-118. For the accumulation of cattle through marriages in southern Africa see Kuper, Wives, and for the first half of nineteenth-century Bechuanaland (Botswana), see also Kinsman, "'Beasts of Burden'," Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 10, 1 (October 1983), 43.

⁶²A notable exception to this is King Sobhuza II who is reported to have been the first king to pay *lobolo* for his wives. See Kuper, Aristocracy, p. 152.

⁶³Kuper, Wives, p. 104, and Kuper, Aristocracy, p. 98.

It was from marrying off their daughters and female relatives that the kings accumulated wealth in cattle. Women from the royal family were the most expensive in terms of bridewealth. The bridewealth paid for King Bhunu's sister, Tonga Tonga, was 100 cattle. For princesses of lower rank and chiefs' daughters *lobolo* was fifteen head or more, whereas for a commoner's daughter twelve head sufficed for *lobolo*.⁶⁴ Over a long period the Dlamini royal family accumulated substantial wealth in this way. From 1934 to 1937 King Sobhuza II accumulated 300 head of cattle from marriages of his female relatives.⁶⁵ Accumulated wealth in cattle was in turn crucial for maintenance of a dominant political position. (Of course, there were other ways by which the king accumulated cattle such as confiscation from people accused of witchcraft or treason and by cross-border raiding. These methods were in use until about the end of the nineteenth-century.) The king had the largest herd of cattle in the country; by 1936 there were 3,000 cattle in royal ranches and about 1,000 cattle in other royal villages.⁶⁶

Accumulation of wealth in cattle through bridewealth and polygyny was one of the means by which patriarchs in Swaziland maintained their class, rank and status against commoners. Indeed commoners, who had more than five or six wives provoked feelings of jealousy from less successful men among the aristocracy; the aristocracy condemned a commoner who happened to be wealthier than his chief. In nineteenth and

⁶⁴Kuper, *Aristocracy*, pp. 98 and 152. See also Fannin, "Swazi Customary Law," p. 14.

⁶⁵Kuper, *Aristocracy*, p. 153.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 151.

early twentieth-century Swaziland political power generated wealth.⁶⁷

However, to the extent that wealth among the aristocrats was owned by men, it showed bias against women within this class. Women among the aristocrats were in fact the means to accumulate wealth, instead of being participants in its acquisition and ownership. As one scholar remarks in the case of nineteenth-century Lesotho, "the payment of bridewealth was an index of the value placed on women by men."⁶⁸ And as long as men's views on the institution of bridewealth are accorded a privileged position over those of women, payment of bridewealth will continue to be vehemently advocated by the men whose patriarchy it perpetuates. An equal opportunity for men and women to express their views on payment of bridewealth and on its symbolic importance within a family has revealed polarization. In an interview conducted by Eldredge in Lesotho during the 1980s men defended the practice of bridewealth, whereas women perceived bridewealth as men's means of depriving them of their children and property, especially after the death of their husbands, should women decide to leave their in-laws.⁶⁹ In the case of Swaziland, where the prevalent view on the institution of bridewealth is still that of men, no evidence has yet been reported of women's counter - opinion such as found by

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, p. 153.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁶⁹Eldredge, Kingdom, pp. 143-144. For similar divergent views on bridewealth elsewhere in Africa, see Sophia F. Petsalis, The Silent Power: A Portrait of Nigerian Women (Montreal: Meridian Press, 1990), pp. 29-31.

scholars in Lesotho.⁷⁰

Polygynous marriages and bridewealth in the nineteenth-century Swazi state constituted cornerstones for development of patriarchy among the aristocrats. One scholar illuminates this point when he states: "marriage payments and polygyny are not equalizing mechanisms. On the contrary, the rich rely on them to maintain their position."⁷¹ It is in this sense that the way the patriarchal system sustained itself must be understood. Patriarchs ranked the status of their wives for the purpose of succession and inheritance by their sons.

Patriarchy in Swaziland manifested itself in issues pertaining to succession, inheritance, social status or rank within society and the extent of chiefly power, issues resolved through interpretation of the nature of marriage. Swazi society had three types of marriage: the bride's or the groom's initiative; marriages arranged according to kinship classifications; and marriages arranged either by the bride's or the groom's parents. The Swati distinguished between the *umfatimkhulu* (main wife), and the *inkosikati yomuti* (chief woman of the homestead). The main wife acquired authority and elevated status in the homestead after her husband's death, upon which her son had become heir, while the chief woman of the homestead enjoyed such privileges only during the lifetime of her

⁷⁰See for example Fannin, "Principles of Swazi Customary Law," pp. 13-16, and Kuper, *Aristocracy*, pp. 97-98.

⁷¹Kuper, *Wives*, p. 169.

husband. It was possible for one woman to hold both positions.⁷² One scholar points out that "unlike the position of *inkosikati yomuti*, the identity of the *umfatimkhulu* [was] clouded in secrecy and [was] an outcome of the relative ranking of wives."⁷³ Over a long period polygyny became so fundamental to Swazi men that it was "associated with a crop surplus."⁷⁴ This meant that many wives translated into more labor for agricultural work as women worked in their individual fields. More recently one scholar has observed that Swazi women have always played a central role in the Swazi economy.⁷⁵

There was always competition among the wives of the deceased for the position of main wife, because such a position brought about wealth for one's son and social elevation for the mother. "Succession and inheritance go hand in hand, and the fundamental principle underlying the selection of the main heir of a polygynous estate [was] that property and power [were] inherited from men and acquired by them, but [were] *transmitted through women* whose rank, more than any other factor, determine[d]

⁷²See Derman, "Stock and Aristocracy," African Studies, 36, 2 (1977), 121.

⁷³*Ibid.*

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 120.

⁷⁵Margo Russell, "Women, Children and Marriage in Swaziland," in Man Singh Das and Vijay Kumar Gupta, eds. Woman and African Society (New Delhi: M D Publications, 1995), p. 14, see also Hilary Standing, "Gender Relations and Social Transformation in Swaziland: Some Comments on Future Research Possibilities," in Michael Neocosmos, ed., Social Relations in Rural Swaziland: Critical Analyses (University of Swaziland: Social Science Research Unit, 1987), pp. 127- 146. The role of Swazi women in agriculture is beginning to attract scholarly attention, see Christine Roach and Carolyn Sachs, "Swazi Women Farmers: Roles and Responsibilities in Agricultural Production Systems," Occasional Paper Series: Women in Development, Vol. IV, 1984, pp. 1-87.

the choice."⁷⁶ Herein lies a crucial aspect of the explanation of the emergence and maintenance of patriarchal men-women relations in Swaziland. By limiting succession and inheritance to male children, this principle ensured accumulation of property and wealth by men, and simultaneously the disempowerment of women. In a more general sense, this principle devalued the status of female children against males. Since female children were not entitled to inherit property, their rank and social status were lower than those of male children, who were perceived as guarantors of the family wealth's remaining within the household. Thus, over a period of time, women began to be viewed as perpetual minors in African traditional law.⁷⁷ Property ownership was an important underpinning of patriarchy in general.⁷⁸

⁷⁶Hilda Kuper, "Kinship Among the Swazi," in A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde, eds., African Systems of Kinship and Marriage (London: Oxford University Press, reprint 1962), p. 96. Emphasis added.

⁷⁷Arat articulates this point well in the case of patriarchy in Turkey when she says, "let the one who bears a son be proud, let the one who bears a daughter beat herself." See Arat, The Patriarchal Paradox, p. 43. For the evolution of this point in precolonial Swazi customary law and its conflict with the Roman-Dutch law introduced to Swaziland in the last decade of the nineteenth-century, see Alice K. Armstrong and Ronald T. Nhlapo, Law and the Other Sex: The Legal Position of Women in Swaziland (Mbabane: Webster, 1985), pp. 23-36; Thandabantu Nhlapo, Marriage and Divorce in Swazi Law and Custom (Mbabane: Webster, 1992), chapters 4 & 5, and for other examples in precolonial and colonial Zimbabwe and nineteenth-century Lesotho see Nancy Folbre, "Patriarchal Social Formations in Zimbabwe," in Stichter and Parpart, eds., Patriarchy and Class, p. 63, and Eldredge, "Women," Signs, 16, 4 (1991), 727.

⁷⁸See Maria Mies, Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour (London: Zed Books, 1986), chapters 1 & 2; and also a collection of essays in Robert F. Gray and P.H. Gulliver, eds. The Family Estate in Africa: Studies in the Role of Property in Family Structure and Lineage Continuity (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964).

There is no documented evidence that Swazi women challenged the principle of male inheritance that disinherited females. However, they contested the loss of property and wealth to another woman's son in a polygynous marriage. In cases where women did not have sons and thereby faced a possibility of losing property and wealth, which had accrued in their individual households upon their husbands' death, they devised a strategy to retain their household's possessions. A woman would "urge her husband to put a motherless son 'in her stomach' or attach a junior co-wife to her for the specific purpose of providing a son."⁷⁹ (At least in Lesotho widows in wealthy and famous families were allowed to retain their wealth "until their death, when it passed on to male kin."⁸⁰ This is only an explanation for the absence of the practice of 'putting a son in the widows' stomachs.')

Although this method did not allow women to inherit property, it entitled them to keep it and later to pass it over to 'attached' sons.⁸¹ Thus, one of the cornerstones of the development of patriarchy in Swazi society, namely inheritance by males only, remained intact. It is important to underscore this point for an understanding of events in subsequent chapters of this work.

Ever since the creation of the office of the queen mother during the reign of King

⁷⁹Kuper, "Kinship," in Radcliffe-Brown and Forde, eds., African Systems, p. 96. A well-known example of this practice in Swazi politics is that of King Mbandzeni, 1875-1889, who was 'put in the stomach' of Sisile Khumalo. This act enabled him to inherit the Swazi throne after the death of the heir Ludvonga. See Kuper, Aristocracy, p. 101.

⁸⁰Eldredge, "Women," Signs, 16, 4 (1991), 729.

⁸¹Kuper, "Kinship," in Radcliffe-Brown and Forde, eds., African Systems, p. 96.

Sobhuza I (c. 1805-1839), the Swazi state was referred to as a dual monarchy.⁸² The king ruled together with his mother and upon installation in their positions each was granted the title *Ingwenyama* (lion) and *Indhlovukazi* (she-elephant), respectively. Their offices were the highest in the land. One scholar emphasized their equal political power as follows: "they are the central figures of all national activities: they preside over the highest courts; they summon national gatherings, control the age classes, allocate land, disburse national wealth, take precedence in ritual, and help to organize important social events."⁸³ As will be shown in subsequent chapters of this work, this statement obscures both the Swazi patriarchal political structure and the subordinate position of the queen mother to the authority and persona of the king. Rhetoric aside, it was at the death of either the king or the queen mother that their differences in status and national significance were revealed. As the same scholar pointed out, "at death the social personality, the full status, is exposed; death breaks existing bonds and shapes new ones. Death ceremonies in every culture indicate status, and the world of the dead is modelled on the organizations of the living."⁸⁴ In a hierarchical society like the Swazi, burial and mourning rules revealed "the privileges of the aristocrats, the dominance and active strength of the men, [and] the subordination of women."⁸⁵ The period on mourning for

⁸²See chapter III for a discussion of this point.

⁸³Kuper, *Aristocracy*, p. 54.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, p. 181.

the king's death was longer than that of the queen mother. It was one year for men and three years for women for a king's death, and less than one year for that of the queen mother. Swazi kings were/are buried in the tightly guarded royal groves, whereas the queen mothers were/are buried in cattle byre of royal village. This shows that the king and the queen mother were not of equal status both in the royalists' and public's eyes. Indeed, the Swazi king was a "Little God," to borrow Diana Wylie's phrase which she used to refer to Tshekedi Khama, regent of the Ngwato chieftdom.⁸⁶

The death of a king in Swaziland was kept a secret among the royalists until his heir was chosen.⁸⁷ Kuper argues that such a secrecy was maintained for the concern that the country could be exposed to attacks by enemies.⁸⁸ Contrary to Kuper's view, it could be argued that the main concern was the royalists' fear that the competition for succession among the princes could attract public interest and support for certain princes and thereby complicate the succession rules which were shrouded in mystery. Or alternatively, that the masses could seize upon the opportunity to demand the replacement of the institution of kingship by a popular form of government. At least the world over people had demanded the end of kingship rule when there was a crisis in the royal house.

⁸⁶See Wylie, A Little God.

⁸⁷In this the emaSwati resemble the Russians in the era of the defunct Union of Socialist Soviets Republics when the death of a president was shrouded in secrecy until the successor was identified. Probably this similarity is an indication of the heavy handed patriarchal rule in the two countries.

⁸⁸Kuper, Aristocracy, p. 86.

Summary

This chapter has presented a background history of the nineteenth-century Swazi state with emphasis on the development of patriarchy. It identified the patriarchal class as constituted by the king and the princes at the top and chiefs, rich and powerful men from the nation. The only woman who was publicly acknowledged to hold a political office was the queen mother. But, the ability of women who became queen mothers to influence the direction of the Swazi politics to a different course, for instance, to include more women in political decision making was limited by the patriarchal system into which they were co-opted.⁸⁹

The discussion in this chapter demonstrates that the development of patriarchy in Africa predates the coming of European colonialism and capitalism. Of course, it has been argued that even in Europe patriarchal relations developed before capitalism.⁹⁰ Although European colonialism added a layer on the existing patriarchal relations among African societies, the emergence of patriarchy in Africa must be understood by studying local conditions which gave rise to it, rather than tracing its origins to the expansion of European capitalism to non-European societies.⁹¹ But, like elsewhere in the world, the

⁸⁹For a discussion of this point, see chapter III.

⁹⁰For the case of pre-capitalist England, see Mary Murray, The Law of the Father?: Patriarchy in the transition from feudalism to capitalism (London: Routledge, 1995), chapter 4.

⁹¹For the tendency to trace patriarchy in non-European societies to the expansion of European capitalism, see for example Mies, Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale.

development of patriarchy in Swaziland was influenced by property ownership, inheritance and the political structure. Polygyny and bridewealth payments were major features which held together the Swazi patriarchal class. And women were the bonds that connected patriarchs to one another. Yet, women were excluded from participation from politics. This exclusion was a historical development and not a biological occurrence. The next chapter examines the role of queen mothers and queen regents in Swazi royal politics from 1865 to 1890 in the context of patriarchy.

Chapter Three

QUEENS, QUEEN MOTHERS AND QUEEN REGENTS IN SWAZI POLITICS, 1865-1890: PRINCIPAL PARTICIPANTS IN KINGSHIP

In general terms, this chapter provides a context in which to understand the main theme of this dissertation, namely, power relations in the era of queen-regent Labotsibeni of Swaziland. It traces the circumstances that led to the emergence of the institution of the queen mother and queen regent in Swazi royal politics. Queen-regent Labotsibeni's contribution to the history of Swaziland forms part of a long - established tradition of the involvement of queen mothers and queen-regents in the politics of Swaziland.

This chapter examines the role of queen mothers and queen regents in Swazi royal politics, focusing on the period from 1865 to 1890. The chapter argues that queen mothers and queen regents were an integral part of Swazi kingship. They performed many political and ritual functions that were fundamental to kingship. The queen mother was a direct participant in king-making. She was also a king-maker in indirect ways by virtue of her character and status. During selection of the king, the character and social status of the mothers of princes contending for the throne were an important consideration: the prince whose mother had qualifications deemed important was likely to be a successful candidate. The queen mother was herself co-ruler albeit in a subordinate position to her son, the king: she ruled jointly with the king in the dual monarchy that was

Swaziland.¹ And during the interim period until a newly - selected king came of age, the queen regent was the *de facto* sovereign of the country. In the final analysis, then, the queen mother was important in resolving succession struggles. And what is more, she indeed became "a vehicle to express the continuity of the centre" during the succession struggles upon the death of a king.² The queen mother was thus involved in virtually all important matters of royal court politics as well as in kingship itself.

Therefore, a study of the role queen mothers and queen regents in Swaziland's political history is important for an understanding of the distribution of power not only in that country, but also in traditional African political systems generally. Although the institution of kingship in many African countries has survived into modern times, studies of African kingship systems have generally ignored the role of queen mothers and queen regents. Unless this omission is redressed, an understanding of the power and operations

¹As the mother of the king, the queen mother was believed the most able to restrain her son from abusing power, and it is possible that this consideration was behind the establishment of the dual monarchy in Swaziland. In a sense, therefore, the queen mother functioned as a check point against "the madness of the king," to borrow Vivian Green's phrase. Green employs this phrase as a descriptive term for widely different behaviors of kings or rulers, "ranging from the madman or mad woman who is so completely incapable of looking after him or herself that he or she has to be confined and, if given to unprovoked violence, even kept under restraint, to the persons who suffer from so comparatively innocuous a psychosis or neurosis that to all intents and purposes they appear as normal." See Vivian Green, The Madness Of Kings: Personal Trauma and the Fate of Nations (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 3.

²Although this observation by Simon Simonse is on queen mothers in Southern Sudan, the point also applies to queen mothers in Swaziland. See Simon Simonse, Kings of Disaster: Dualism, Centralism and the Scapegoat King in Southern Sudan (Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1992), p. 281.

of kingship will continue to be incomplete. This chapter attempts to address this issue, arguing that the wives of the king in general, and the queen mothers and queen regents in particular, were interested in maintaining their privileged position in Swazi society. That is, once these women entered the domain of royal power, they clung so tenaciously to it that they did anything within their means and power to maintain their position and influence. In so doing, they actively contributed to creating and perpetuating social differentiation, and patriarchy in the society.

Brief Background on Royal Polygyny

Polygyny was a common practice in Swaziland. For the king, however, polygyny became an important instrument for securing the political support and allegiance of the various Swazi clans and of conquered people as well. But marriage is a two-way street, uniting and binding together the families of the married couples. Therefore, some clans in early Swaziland were able to exploit the marriage of a daughter to the king by securing a permanent niche in the royal house.³ The Matsebula and Motsa clans are cases in point.

³Hilda Kuper, An African Aristocracy: Rank Among the Swazi (London: Oxford University Press, 1947, reprinted 1965), p. 84. J.S.M. Matsebula, The King's Eye (Cape Town: Longman, 1983), p.1, and p. 13 n.1. For a discussion of other clans closely linked with the royalists through rituals, see Kuper, Aristocracy, pp. 79-84. This resembles what occurred during Buganda state formation; see Nakanyike B. Musisi, "Women, 'Elite Polygyny,' And Buganda State Formation," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 16, 4 (1991), 772. For a nuanced examination of the practice of polygyny as it affected women in general elsewhere in Africa, see Sophia Florakas Petsalis, The Silent Power: A Portrait of Nigerian Women (Montreal: Meridian Press, 1990), chapter 4.

Since the reign of king Sobhuza I (Somhlolo) from about 1805, the Matsebula and the Motsa have each traditionally provided a wife to the king as soon as he came of age.

A king had the largest number of wives in the country, just like other kings elsewhere in precolonial Africa. For example, in the case of the eighteenth and nineteenth century Asante state, the Asantehene (as the Asante king was referred to) had the largest number of wives.⁴ Because he was king of Swaziland, and also because he usually contracted his marriages for social and political purposes, it may be argued that his wives became a women's social and political "class" of a peculiar nature. At the top of this political class were queen regents and queen mothers who were intimately connected with the monarchy.⁵ And yet, students of Swaziland's history have long ignored this important group of women, including that of the queen mother.⁶ However,

⁴For Asante, see T.C. McCaskie, "State and Society, Marriage and adultery: Some Considerations Towards A Social History of Pre-Colonial Asante," Journal of African History, 22 (1981), 487.

⁵Scholars are beginning to study women in "elite polygyny," in African societies, see Musisi, "Elite Polygyny," Signs, 16, 4 (1991), 757-786.

⁶An exception here is Philip Bonner, Kings, Commoners, And Concessionaires: The Evolution and Dissolution of the Nineteenth-Century Swazi State (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983), and to some extent, Kuper, Aristocracy. None of these scholars have focused particularly on queen mothers and queen regents. For works ignoring the roles of queen mothers and queen-regents see for example, J.H. Proctor, "Traditionalism and Parliamentary Government in Swaziland," African Affairs, 72, 288 (July 1973), 273-287, and Christian P. Potholm, Swaziland: The Dynamics of Political Modernization (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972). The role of queen mothers in politics was until most recently largely ignored in literature which deals with women and the state in Africa. This is a conspicuous omission in a collection of essays in Jane L. Parpart & Kathleen A. Staudt, eds., Women and the State in Africa (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990).

queen mothers and queen regents were the basis of traditional authority in Swaziland.

The image of queen mothers in Swaziland as presented by anthropologists is inactive. Aidoo's criticism of the static picture of the position and status of queen mothers in nineteenth-century Asante applies also to Swaziland.⁷ The position of the Swazi queen mother contrasts fundamentally with that of the queen mother in nineteenth-century Buganda state in two aspects. First, the Bugandan queen mother was conferred the title of *Kabaka* at the accession of her son to the throne, but henceforth was prohibited from seeing him again. There was no such prohibition for the queen mother in the case of Swaziland. Second, the Bugandan king's sister, referred to as the queen sister, and the king's main wife were also conferred the *Kabaka* title. They and the queen mother were co-rulers with the king and were responsible for certain important ritual ceremonies of kingship.⁸ However, in Swaziland the king did not rule together with his sister, and the queen mother was given a title different from that of her son, possibly to emphasize her distinct political office. We know very little about relations between the many wives of the king and the queen mother.

⁷Agnes Akosua Aidoo, "Asante Queen mothers in Government and Politics in the Nineteenth Century," in Filomina Chioma Steady, ed., The Black Woman Cross-Culturally (Rochester: Schenkman Books, 1981, 1985), p. 65.

⁸Benjamin C. Ray, Myth, Ritual, And Kingship in Buganda (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 137-138. "The title 'Kabaka' is in fact gender-neutral. In addition to king, it applied to three women: the Queen Mother, the Queen Sister, and the Kaddulubaale, or Chief Wife, who had charge of the king's charms." See *ibid.*, p. 219, n. 3.

Scholars of Swazi history have long recognized the existence of class structure in precolonial Swazi society.⁹ However, they have not shown how royal women were a significant factor in perpetuating gender and social stratification. An examination of the positions of Swazi royal women shows that perpetuation of gender difference has to do more with the privileged position derived from political power, than with the results of mere patriarchy. Women in royal circles were equally interested in continuation of gender differences, for such a scenario accorded them a privileged position in Swazi society.

In more recent times scholars have analyzed the continuity and emergence of patriarchy in the context of colonialism in Africa, focusing mainly on men's role in maintaining a patriarchal social structure in the face of colonialism.¹⁰ By so doing, they have neglected the role played by women in positions of power in perpetuating gender differentiation in African societies. For instance, other scholars have cautioned us against perceiving all men as the oppressors in general, because in the past some women were "partners in oppression and [are] having the potential of becoming primary oppressors

⁹See Philip Bonner, "Classes, the mode of production and the state in pre-colonial Swaziland," in Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore, eds., Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa (London: Longman, 1980), pp. 80-101; and Kuper, Aristocracy.

¹⁰See for example Elizabeth Schmidt, "Patriarchy, Capitalism, and the Colonial State in Zimbabwe," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 16, 4 (1991), 732-756; Diana Wylie, A Little God: The Twilight of Patriarchy in a Southern African Chieftdom (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1990), and Hilda Kuper, Sobhuza II Ngwenyama and King of Swaziland: The Story of an Hereditary Ruler and His Country (London: Duckworth, 1978).

themselves."¹¹

The Role of the Queen Mother in Swazi Politics

The Swazi state was established by Ngwane III (of Dlamini descent) through a series of conquests in the 1760s and 1770s. He and his followers came from east of the Lubombo mountain range. King Sobhuza I (Ngwane IV, also known as Somhlolo) who ruled Swaziland from about 1805 to 1839, is considered the first Swazi king: he developed Swazi kingship by "a process which involved the welding of clan families under the loose hegemony of the Dlamini."¹² The early Swazi kings were always aware of the tensions between them and the Dlamini princes, who perceived themselves as having strong claims to the throne. Consequently, according to oral tradition kings developed powers of summary execution of those suspected to threaten the life of a king and by extension, the Swazi kingship and the nation itself. However, in practice kings used such powers arbitrarily. To counter the kings' arbitrarily powers there emerged an innovation in Dlamini (Swazi) politics, namely, that the mother of the Dlamini ruler was accorded a significant position in ritual ceremonies as well as in politics. There was a belief that the queen mother could restrain her son the king from heavy-handed actions

¹¹Filomina Chioma Steady, "Introduction," in Filomina Chioma Steady, The Black Woman Cross-Culturally (Rochester, Vermont: Schenkman Books, first published 1981, reprinted 1985), p. 3.

¹²Huw M. Jones, A Biographical Register of Swaziland to 1902 (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, 1993), p. 178.

against his subjects. The origin of such a belief is attributed by oral tradition to King Sobhuza I's mother, Somnjalose, of the Simelane clan. She is believed to have restrained her son from brutal actions against his subjects, and by so doing secured for herself and for future queen mothers a permanent and privileged place in ritual and in the monarchy.¹³ This was a significant achievement for royal women, as they were now openly acknowledged as co-rulers. Since then, queen mothers have fiercely protected and redefined their privileged position against attempts to weaken or even nullify it during precolonial, colonial and post-colonial times.¹⁴ Others have interpreted the creation of the dual monarchy "as a notable ingredient in the durability of Royal hegemony."¹⁵ And because queen mothers were of non-Dlamini origin, they often came with their cultural baggage injecting new ideas and practices, thereby influencing the dynamics and directions of Swazi politics. For example, King Sobhuza I's senior wife, Tsandzile Ndwandwe, daughter of Zwide who was king of the Ndwandwe in northern Zululand,

¹³Kuper, *Aristocracy*, pp. 12-13. Here the word "permanent" refers to the fact that the queen mother and the king still rule the Kingdom of Swaziland as dual monarchy. Another variant spelling of Somnjalose is Somtjalose.

¹⁴The activities of Queen Mother Labotsibeni should be interpreted as an indication of how queen mothers protected and redefined their domain and the Swazi identity. On the Swazi identity, see Manelisi Genge, "The Making of Swazi Identity" (A seminar paper in African History, Michigan State University, March 8, 1993), pp. 1-31.

¹⁵Richard Michael Levin, "Hegemony and Crisis: Swazi Royal Power in Transition" (D.Phil. thesis, University of Liverpool, 1985), p. 22.

introduced to the Swazi royal practices the annual *incwala* ceremony¹⁶ which has henceforth became one of the exercises by which the monarchy reinforces its hegemony over the amaSwazi.

A total of eight queen mothers reigned from the time of Layaka Ndwandwe (about 1750-1780), to Gwamile Labotsibeni Mdluli (1890-1921). There are no known contemporary documentary references to the first two queen mothers (Layaka Ndwandwe, and Lakubheka Mndzebele). And there is very little that is known of *Indhlovukazi* Lojiba. She was an *Indhlovukazi* during the reign of King Sobhuza I, 1815-1839. Huw M. Jones speculates that she probably died before Sobhuza's death in 1839, and that she was succeeded as *Indhlovukazi* by her sister, Somnjalose Simelane.¹⁷ Therefore, this discussion will focus on Somnjalose as the starting point of the institution of queen mothers in Swaziland. Somnjalose Simelane (*laMsibandze*¹⁸) came to the royal circles as an *inhlanti*¹⁹ to her sister Lojiba, King Ndungunye's chief wife. An *inhlanti* was usually a sister or a very close relative of a woman who was publicly acknowledged as a wife. Lojiba did not have male children, and Somnjalose gave birth to the heir

¹⁶*Ibid.* Incwala is an annual national ceremony.

¹⁷Jones, *Register*, p. 543.

¹⁸According to the Swazi custom a daughter is usually referred to by the name of her father, and the prefix *la* means the daughter of -- in this case, it means the daughter of Msibande.

¹⁹This means a subordinate co-wife. The practice of having an *inhlanti* exists only in Swazi royal circles. A more or less similar marriage arrangement had occurred also in the 19th century Asante state, especially regarding substitution of wives associated with a particular Stool. See McCaskie, "Marriage and Adultery," 489.

Sobhuza I about 1780. Upon the latter's death in 1839, she became queen-regent.²⁰

The next queen mother was Tsandzile Ndwandwe (laZidze or laZwide, Kuthandile). Tsandzile was a daughter of Zwide Ndwandwe kaLanga, the ruler of the Ndwandwe, the most important and powerful chiefdom in Nongoma, south of the Phongola River, in modern northern KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa. She was born about 1806. Jones speculates that Tsandzile was brought to the Swazi royal homestead when she was about six or eight years old "to await her marriage to Sobhuza waNdungunye." In about 1825 she bore Mswati, who succeeded Sobhuza as king of Swaziland in 1839.²¹ However, since her son was then a minor, Tsandzile assumed the office of main regent together with Malunge (Mswati II's paternal uncle), and this enabled her to take control of the affairs of the kingdom.²²

Sisile laMgangeni Khumalo followed Tsandzile as queen mother in 1865. Sisile was the daughter of Mgangeni Khumalo, who was a chief *indvuna* or brother of Mzilikazi of Ntanga area in the vicinity of Nongoma in the northern part of present day KwaZulu-Natal province. She was King Mswati's favorite wife.²³ Her ascendance to the position

²⁰Jones, Register, pp. 545-546, see also p. 178.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 178. Tsandzile came together with her four half-sisters, File, Lomawandla, laVumisa Ndwandwe and Veya Msibi (daughter of Zwide's tindvuna), as her *inhlanti* to wait her marriage to Sobhuza I. King Sobhuza I married File and laVumisa before Tsandzile. See *ibid.*, p. 446.

²²P.L. Bonner, "Mswati II c.1826-65," in Christopher Saunders, ed., Black Leaders in Southern African History (London: Heinemann, 1979), p. 63.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 318. For Khumalo's status, see Bonner, Kings, p. 261, n. 11.

of queen mother was predictable, for "she came from one of the four clans from whom the Swazi customarily choose their 'great wives.' [But perhaps more important,] as a daughter of Mzilikazi's brother or chief *indvuna*, her parentage entitled her to a certain seniority among Mswati's wives." And lastly, she had only one son, Ludvonga.²⁴

According to the Swazi laws of succession, an heir to the throne should not have siblings from the same mother, and Ludvonga was a suitable candidate for kingship according to this strict interpretation of the laws of succession. The rationale here was to prevent competition and contention for the throne.

Tibati Madvolomafisha Nkambule succeeded Sisile Khumalo as queen mother in 1881. She was born about 1840 and her father was Matikweni Nkambule. She came to the Swazi royal circle as the *inhlanti* of her sister, Nandzi, the wife of King Mswati II. She became queen-regent upon King Mbandzeni's death on October 6, 1889.²⁵ Tibati was succeeded as queen mother by Labotsibeni Gwamile Mdluli. It could be argued that the practice of having an *inhlanti* was a mechanism to bring about durable family ties between the Swazi royal family and that of the bride. The *inhlanti* was a sort of an insurance or fall back, should something happen to the main wife. For example, should the main wife fail to give birth to a male heir or should an heir die at infancy, or should she suffer from a premature death, she was substituted for by her *inhlanti* or was given a male heir born by her *inhlanti*. Lojiba Simelane and Nandzi Nkambule are cases in point.

²⁴Bonner, *Kings*, p. 262, n. 11.

²⁵For a fuller biographical information of Tibati see Jones, *Register*, pp. 457-459.

Labotsibeni was born around 1858 at Luhlekweni homestead in northern Swaziland. Her father, Matsanjana Mdluli, ruled over one of the small chiefdoms in the Hhohho district in northern Swaziland.²⁶ About 1870 following her father's death, Labotsibeni went to live at Ludzidzini royal residence with her father's brother, Mvelase Mdluli. Mvelase Mdluli had taken over paternal responsibilities for her according to Swazi tradition.²⁷ However, according to Watts, Labotsibeni was brought to the royal circles "as a concubine and attendant" to King Mbandzeni's wives.²⁸ Labotsibeni was conscious of her aristocratic status long before she was married to Mbandzeni. She is reported to have rebuffed Prince Mbandzeni's proposal, before he became king, by telling

²⁶For a fuller biography of Labotsibeni, see Jones, Register, pp. 400-402. There is still a mystery surrounding the death of Labotsibeni's father. A common view is that he died while fighting Tsibeni, one of the chiefs of the BaPedi in Moodies area south of Barberton. For this view, see Jones, Register, p. 400, and J.S.M. Matsebula, A History of Swaziland (Cape Town: Longman, 3rd ed., 1988), p.172. But Watts mentions that Labotsibeni's father "was smelt out as a wizard and his following [was] dispersed" by King Mbandzeni and he fled. See C.C. Watts, Dawn in Swaziland (Aberdeen: The University Press, 1922), p. 37. 'Smelling-out' and 'killing off' rivals were, as Alan R. Booth observes, "indispensable tool[s] in the practise and retention of power" by the Swazi monarchy as well as by the chiefs. And the practise of such tolls was regarded as part of the Swazi tradition. See Alan R. Booth, "'European Courts Protect Women and Witches': Colonial Law Courts as Redistribution of Power in Swaziland 1920-1950," Journal of Southern African Studies, 18, 2 (June 1992), 265.

²⁷Jones, Register, p. 400. See also Matsebula, History, p. 172. In fact, Mvelase Mdluli became Labotsibeni's father by levirate marriage to her mother. See Kuper, Aristocracy, p.103. Through this levirate marriage, she also became known as laMvelase.

²⁸Watts, Swaziland, p. 37.

him that she "cannot be courted by a person from a common village."²⁹ This statement throws light on her self-image as an aristocrat, a self-perception which she later demonstrated throughout her political career. She tolerated nothing that challenged her aristocratic status. In 1874 King Mbandzeni married her after his installation. Owing to her shrewdness and force of character, she quickly became a force to reckon with in important matters in the royal house, even before Mbandzeni's death in October 1889.³⁰

As should be obvious by now, the custom of clan exogamy meant that queen mothers and queen-regents came from outside of the royal Dlamini clan. Indeed, some of them even came from outside Swaziland. However, what they shared in common was the fact that they came from chiefly family backgrounds. Because of their background, they had an impact on the dynamics of royal politics, for two reasons. First, coming from chiefly families, they were familiar with politics and were therefore more likely to get involved in it.³¹ Second, since they were foreigners to the Dlamini royal clan, they inevitably infused the established royal practices with foreign ideas and notions. For example, one scholar of Swazi history claims that Tsandzile tried to change the way

²⁹Quoted in Matsebula, History, p. 172. Herein lies a probable explanation of Mbandzeni's "smelling out" of Labotsibeni's father as a witch and the dismantling of his following which culminated in his fleeing, if we are to believe Watts's statement as mentioned above.

³⁰Watts, Swaziland, p. 37.

³¹The significance of family background to women's rise to national political leadership has been observed by scholars elsewhere. See Michael A. Genovese, "Women as National Leaders: What Do We Know?" in Michael Genovese, ed., Women As National Leaders (Sage: Newbury Park, 1993), p. 214.

power was distributed between the center and the periphery. Sisile, on the other hand, influenced politics in the opposite direction--she attempted to strengthen central authority vis-a-vis the periphery. And what is more, she so enhanced her power that her tenure marked the beginning of the queen mother's involvement in the highest echelons of decision-making in the Swazi kingdom. Sisile attempted to include women in council meetings, an assembly dominated by men so far. These innovations by the two queen mothers were, however, opposed by the Swazi patriarchal aristocracy.³² Bonner refers to these developments, however, he does not explain why and how these two queen mothers made innovations to Swazi politics. Labotsibeni also sought to centralize power during her reign as queen regent (1899-1921). But, unlike Sisile, she did not attempt to bring women into the highest decision-making body of Swazi politics. It could be argued that queens and queen mothers connected the Dlamini royalists politically to certain clans in Swaziland and also to powerful neighboring chiefdoms such as the Ndwandwe in Zululand, south of Swaziland. It is arguable that their marriages were intended to minimize domestic and foreign threats to the royalists.³³

³²Bonner, Kings, p. 162; see also Jones, Register, p. 318.

³³In this dissertation the term royalists refers specifically to those who were part of the royal house, namely, the king, his wives, the king's children and the council of regents.

“Witchcraft”³⁴ perceived as a Factor in Royal Politics

The power of queen mothers and queen-regents was especially evident during interregnums. They skillfully exploited the popular belief in witchcraft to their advantage. There was a strong belief in “witchcraft” among the emaSwati. As in precolonial Africa in general, the death of a king was not perceived to be due to natural causes. Instead, the king's death was blamed on witchcraft. Consequently, witchcraft had political ramifications.³⁵ But in the case of Swaziland, the prevalence of suspicion of

³⁴This term is used with reservations in this work. There is still no consensus among Africanists regarding the precise meaning of the term ‘withcraft.’ Cyprian F. Fisiy & Peter Geschiere point out that “there is good reason to question whether terms like ‘sorcery’, ‘witchcraft’, or the French ‘*sorcellerie*’ are good translations of the African terms.” Although they prefer the term ‘occult forces’ which they claim to have a neutral translation, they too still employ the terms: ‘witchcraft’ and ‘sorcery.’ See Cyprian F. Fisiy & Peter Geschiere, “Judges and Witches, or How is the State to Deal with Witchcraft?” Cahiers d’Etudes africaines, 118 XXX-2 (1990), 2n, 136. Hilda Kuper, on her part, favors the terms ‘ritual’ and ‘specialist in ritual.’ See citation in Booth, “European Courts Protect Women and Witches,” Journal of Southern African Studies, 18, 2 (June 1992), 2n, 254. Although Africanist scholars are still grappling with a scholarly understanding of what exactly is ‘witchcraft’ and how does it work, if there is indeed anything called ‘witchcraft’, in general this subject/topic is an old one among Africanist scholars. For example, by the nineteen fifties scholars were already at work attempting to understanding ‘witchcraft’. See, for instance, Monica Hunter Wilson, “Witchcraft Beliefs and Social Structure,” American Journal of Sociology, LVI, 4 (January 1951), 307-313.

³⁵More recently there is a renewed scholarly interest in the role of ‘witchcraft’ in politics. See Peter Geschiere, The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia 1997); Peter Delius, A Lion Amongst the Cattle: Reconstruction and Resistance in the Northern Transvaal (Ravan Press: Johannesburg, 1996), chapter 6; Isak Niehaus, “Witches of the Transvaal Lowveld and their Familiars: Conceptions of Duality, Power and Desire,” Cahiers d’Etudes africaines, 138-139, XXXV-2-3 (1995), 513-540; and Isak A. Niehaus, “Witch-Hunting and Political Legitimacy: Continuity and Change in Green-Valley, Lebowa, 1930-91,” Africa, 64, 4 (1993), 498-530. For a brief commentary on the practices of ‘witchcraft’

witchcraft on the death of a king resulted in two contradictory viewpoints regarding his wives. The wives of a king were viewed with distrust, for they were believed to be jealous or treacherous in their efforts to ensure the succession of their sons.³⁶ But once a son had been selected and installed as king, it was believed that his mother was the only one who could be neither jealous nor treacherous against him. This belief was based on the assumption that "a mother always loves her child, and he loves her. They respect each other greatly and so work together peacefully."³⁷ This was an idealized view of the relations between the queen mother (*Indhlovukazi*- She Elephant), and her son, King (*Ngwenyama*- the Lion). Relations between queen mother Sisile and King Mbandzeni broke down to such an extent that the King ordered her execution.³⁸ Similarly, relations between *Indhlovukazi* Labotsibeni and her son, Ngwane V (Bhunu), who was king from 1895 to December 10, 1899, were punctuated by tension. Consequently, when Bhunu

among the amaSwazi, see Hilda Kuper, *The Swazi: A South African Kingdom* (San Francisco: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1963), pp. 65-67. And for the first historical account of how colonial courts dealt with 'witchcraft' in Swaziland see Booth, "'European Courts'," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18, 2 (June 1992), 251-275.

³⁶Kuper, *Aristocracy*, p. 56. It is a curious coincidence that the practice of 'witchcraft' worldwide was always largely associated with women. For 'witchcraft' accusations in colonial America, see Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987, reprinted in 1989), and P. Boyer, and S. Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974). For the European context see Elspeth Whitney, "The Witch 'She' /The Historian 'He': Gender and the Historiography of the European Witch-Hunts," *Journal of Women's History*, 7, 3 (Fall 1995), 77-101.

³⁷Quoted in *ibid*.

³⁸Bonner, *Kings*, p. 163.

died it was widely rumored that Labotsibeni had a hand (by poisoning or witchcraft) in his death.³⁹ Kuper and other anthropologists ignore these moments of tension between queen mothers and kings, thereby presenting a picture of stress-free relations between these two heads of state. This omission is probably the basis of Patrick Harries's criticism of works by Kuper and other anthropologists, who tend to avoid areas of conflict in their writings.⁴⁰

Elsewhere in Africa, scholars have observed tension between the queen mother and her co-ruler son, a tension that often led to the removal of the son from power, because of alleged negligence or incompetence. In the case of Asante, Aidoo claims that the queen mother could not control her grown-up sons.⁴¹ This was the case in Swaziland, although Kuper has presented us with a picture of a neat balance of power in the dual monarchy.

As the king came of age, however, he started to monopolize control of the *emabutfo* (military regiments, singular - *libutfo*). He even expanded them by establishing

³⁹Watts, Swaziland, p. 38. The death of a king or an heir under dubious circumstances was not a new phenomenon in Swazi history. For example, Ludvonga, an heir who was replaced with King Mbandzeni in 1875, died under such conditions. See Bonner, Kings, p.124, and Jones, Register, p. 113. For the mysterious death of Nsusa, Mswati's son by laSimelane (daughter of Maboya), and a possible heir to the throne, see Matsebula, History, p. 61.

⁴⁰Patrick Harries, "Slavery, Social Incorporation and Surplus Extraction; The Nature of Free and Unfree Labour in South-East Africa," Journal of African History, 22 (1981), 310.

⁴¹Aidoo, "Queen Mothers," in Steady, ed., Woman, pp. 71-72.

new age-grade regiments. As a result, the newly created regiments were more loyal to the king than to the queen mother, and this provided him with a vital component of the state apparatus. Once the king had consolidated his position on the throne, the balance of power gradually tipped in his favor. This is how Mbandzeni (c. 1857-1889), who ascended to the Swazi throne under shaky grounds, was able to eliminate queen mother Sisile Khumalo. Tibati Nkambule, who had brought him up after his mother's death, succeeded Sisile as queen mother.⁴²

The emergence of the institution of queen mother in Swazi politics introduced the notion of a dual monarchy. Henceforth Swaziland was and is still jointly ruled by the king (*ngwenyama*) and his mother or his fictitious mother, the queen mother (*ndhlovukazi*). With the introduction of the dual monarchy, Alan Booth notes that the personal character of the king and the queen mother became crucial factors in the balance of power between them. During periods in which the queen mother's character was a strong force, the balance of power tilted in her favor. Similarly, when the king's character was strong, he dominated the political scene. The era of queen mother Labotsibeni Mdluli and that of her grandson, Sobhuza II, in Booth's view, provide examples of the influence of character on the balance of power of the dual monarchy.⁴³ Kuper, however,

⁴²Jones, Register, p. 126. For a discussion of the reasons for Mbandzeni's elimination of Sisile, see Bonner, Kings, pp. 162-163.

⁴³Alan R. Booth, Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983), p. 45.

discounts this character factor. Instead, she emphasizes the acquisition of western education by a king as a determinant in tipping the balance of power in his favor. She cites the example of King Sobhuza II as the case in point. Not surprisingly, she concludes that "Swazi political power radiates from the king."⁴⁴ However, it could be argued that neither the king's nor the queen mother's character, nor the acquisition of western education, was a critical factor tipping the balance of power. Instead, a decisive factor was the extent of their influence and control over royal circles, and especially the military. Simon Simonse makes a similar observation on the role of the military in propping up kings in the Southern Sudan. He observes that "economic and military institutions function to underpin the King's position in a pre-existing balance of power."⁴⁵

Philip Bonner has observed that "the dual monarchy in Swaziland has always been a powerful source of stability, and never more so than after the death of a king, or during a period of minority that followed."⁴⁶ The king and queen mother enjoyed unparalleled positions of privilege and authority, according to Hilda Kuper, hence adultery with a queen mother carried the same penalty as treason. This sex taboo with the queen mother may explain why the brothers of the deceased king took over all of his wives through levirate marriage, except the queen mother herself.⁴⁷

⁴⁴Kuper, Aristocracy, p. 56.

⁴⁵Simonse, Kings of Disaster, p. 6.

⁴⁶Bonner, Kings, p. 105.

⁴⁷Kuper, Aristocracy, p. 54. It could be argued, the exception on the queen mother was motivated by a desire to avoid a possibility of her producing another son. This was true in Lesotho as well. For Lesotho, see Elizabeth A. Eldredge, A South African Kingdom: The

Matsebula emphasizes the importance of the status of the mother of the heir apparent and the ways by which she came to the royal circles. According to him, a major consideration in the selection of a queen mother was whether she was betrothed to the royal house by her family, or whether she came there by her own. He argues that the choice of the queen mother often fell on the woman who had been chosen by the royal family to be the king's wife. But Kuper gives a different criterion for the selection of a queen mother. According to her, the overriding consideration was that the candidate should have only one male child.⁴⁸ However, these were only ideal qualifications, and were not rigidly applied. For example, they were not applied to Labotsibeni, who had four children (three sons and one daughter), but was nevertheless chosen queen mother after Mbandzeni's death. The institution of the queen mother was thus hedged with contradictions, just like that of the princesses of Buganda, who on one hand were allowed to indulge in "sexual conspicuous consumption," but were prohibited from marrying

pursuit of security in nineteenth-century Lesotho (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.130. This Swazi practice contrasts with that of Buganda, where the most beautiful wives of the deceased king were passed over to his successor. This difference could be explained by the point that in Swaziland a king is succeeded only by one of his sons. Therefore, in Swaziland a son is not allowed to take over his father's wives. For the case of Buganda, see Musisi, "Elite Polygyny," Signs, 16, 4 (1991), 777, footnotes 77 and 78.

⁴⁸For these contradictory views, see Matsebula, History, p. 61, and Hilda Beemer, "The Swazi Rain Ceremony (Critical Comments on P.J. Schoeman's Article)," Bantu Studies, IX (1935), 278. Beemer later became Kuper after her marriage and has many publications on Swaziland under the name Kuper. This article also marks the beginning of her close association with King Sobhuza II which culminated in her uncritical writings on the Swazi royalists and the writing of Sobhuza II's biography.

anyone.⁴⁹

The queen mother played a significant role in the domestic affairs of Swaziland. She and the king more than ceremonial worked very closely on national ceremonies.⁵⁰ These ceremonies had varying political, economic, and religious significance, for example the rain rites. The rain rites were central to kingship, and were performed in medicinal rituals that were known only to the queen mother and the king. The involvement of the queen mother in rites so central to kingship established her as a principal participant in Swazi politics.

The Era of Queen Regents in Swazi Politics

The dual nature of the Swazi monarchy was always preserved even during the time of the minority of the king designate. This was an important period of the formative years of the heir apparent. This period was usually characterized by political intrigues within the royal circles either against the heir apparent or the regents. These intrigues were even more destructive if the king died without an acknowledged successor, as was

⁴⁹Quoted in Musisi, *Elite Polygyny*, "Signs, 16, 4 (1991), 774. By "sexual conspicuous consumption" Musisi means a "noticeable, notorious, and self-indulgent sex." See *ibid*, footnote 63. For further paradoxes in the Buganda case, see *ibid*,. 774-776.

⁵⁰The Swazi royal ceremonies have long been a subject of interest among anthropologists, see P.J. Schoeman, "The Swazi Rain Ceremony," *Bantu Studies*, IX (1935), 169-175; Hilda Beemer, "The Swazi Rain Ceremony (Critical Comments on P.J. Schoeman's Article), *Bantu Studies*, IX (1935), 273-280; Hilda Kuper, "A Ritual of Kingship Among The Swazi," *Africa*, XIV, 5 (January 1944), 230-257; Kuper, *Aristocracy*, chapters VI & XI, and T.O. Beidelman, "Swazi Royal Ritual," *Africa*, XXXVI, 4 (1966), 373-405. For a non-anthropologist view, see Matsebula, *History*, chapter 19.

the case with King Mswati I in 1865. In such a situation, the royalists and particularly the inner caucus of the royal family and regents were not only faced with the duty of choosing a successor to the king, but also of choosing the queen mother.⁵¹ The selection of the queen mother demonstrates that the office of queen mother in Swazi political structure was institutionalized for purposes of resolving vexing issues of succession, for keeping order and unity in the ruling family, including social capital, i.e., ability to deal in subjects in their varying constituencies.

The period of regency is therefore important in Swazi political structure, because it highlights the importance of the queen mother or queen regent in Swazi politics. It was during this period that her superior position vis-a-vis other regents and royalists became evident. The regents were often older and more experienced in the mysteries of the kingship than the king himself. Thus, in fundamental ways they were really king makers, for they chose the king, held the throne during his minority, saw to it that he was properly taught the sacred rites of kingship, and initiated him into the corridors of royal power.

Swaziland is endowed with outstanding queen mothers, but in Bonner's view Tsandzile was very exceptional in this regard. Bonner argues that Tsandzile's innovations earned her enormous respect, which placed her in the same league with such regents as Malunge (a senior paternal uncle of king Mswati, c. 1865), and Sandlane Zwane, chief minister of Mswati. These three figures were crucial in resolving the

⁵¹For a discussion of the succession intrigues after king Mswati I's death, see Bonner, Kings, chapter 7.

succession following Mswati's death. The succession was contested by Prince Mbilini, Mswati's eldest son by his first wife, and Ludvonga.⁵² Ludvonga won this political contest.

There were, however, times when the regents found it difficult to resolve the succession disputes. In such situations the opinion of the queen mother became a decisive factor. This happened in 1874 after the mysterious death of the heir, Ludvonga. Tsandzile Ndwandwe, queen regent, asked Sisile, Ludvonga's mother, who had already been chosen as queen mother, for her opinion on the successor to the throne. Sisile suggested a motherless Mbandzeni as successor to Ludvonga.⁵³ Sisile's choice was based on her understanding that Mbandzeni was to hold the throne "only as a regent who would father a child by the woman betrothed to [the late] Ludvonga and who, if male, would be the true ruler."⁵⁴ On theory this reasoning seemed to be a workable arrangement for the following reasons. First, since Mbandzeni had no mother alive, Sisile thought that this offered her the opportunity to continue as queen mother during his reign. Second, Mbandzeni seemed amenable, a quality which she thought she could turn to her advantage --it was an opportunity for her to consolidate her position.⁵⁵ But whatever her

⁵²Bonner, Kings, p. 105. For a discussion of the intricacies of this succession dispute and Mbilini's claims for the throne, see *ibid.*, chapter 7, and Matsebula, History, pp. 61-64.

⁵³Jones, Register, p. 318.

⁵⁴*Ibid.* Somdlalose (Mndvumo) Hlubi was the daughter of Langalibalele Mtimkhulu, the Hlubi chief. She was betrothed to Ludvonga who died before the marriage was formalized. See *ibid.*, p. 280.

⁵⁵Bonner, Kings, p. 128.

motives, Sisile's choice not only resolved a fundamental constitutional question, but also became an important precedent for resolving similar thorny problems, including succession disputes.

By 1879 Sisile's main reason for choosing Mbandzeni was realized. A son named Mdzabuko was born from a liaison between Ludvonga's widow, Somdlalose Hlubi and Mbandzeni in 1879. The birth of this child resulted in a power struggle between queen mother Sisile and King Mbandzeni, during which fresh claims were made on behalf of the baby as the legitimate heir through the levirate.⁵⁶ But Mbandzeni was not the passive boy Sisile thought he was. Having tasted power, Mbandzeni was not willing to relinquish it to the new contender. At first Sisile held strong, largely owing to the support of Tsandzile and Malunge, two of the most powerful and experienced figures in the history of the Swazi regency. With the death of Tsandzile and Malunge, however, the balance of power shifted gradually in favor of Mbandzeni. He eventually emerged victorious in the struggle, and in February 1881 had Sisile executed. He also authorized the poisoning of the infant child and Somdlalose died as well.⁵⁷ He then replaced Sisile with Tibati

⁵⁶Jones, Register, pp. 318-319. Levirate was a common practice in the Swazi society in general. It was a practice of marrying a brother's widow. The children born out of the levirate marriage were usually considered to be children of the late husband. For our case here, this meant that a male child born out of the levirate marriage of King Mbandzeni and his brother's widow Somdlalose Hlubi would have had a legitimate claim to the Swazi throne.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 280 & 319; and Bonner, Kings, p. 160.

Nkambule, a woman who had raised him at the Gunundwini royal homestead.⁵⁸

The power struggle between the queen mother and Mbandzeni revealed many aspects of royal politics. First, it demonstrated the difficulty of maintaining the balance of power between the queen mother and the king, especially when the two heads of state were determined to assert their prerogatives. Second, it revealed the extent of the efforts each head of state was prepared to take to secure his or her position in the royal circles. By eliminating Sisile, the infant heir, and his mother, Mbandzeni completely destroyed that branch of royal genealogy in Swaziland. Then, he established himself as the main king, instead of a regent to father a real king, as he was viewed by Sisile. Although he had eliminated the queen mother, he did not abolish the position. Finally, Mbandzeni's elimination of Sisile and his replacing her with Tibati as queen mother meant that once a Swazi king was well established on the throne, he had some prerogatives to choose a queen mother from the widows of his father to be his co-head of state with him. This itself was an innovation in Swazi politics.

When Mbandzeni died in 1889, Tibati Madvolomafisha Nkambule was elevated from the position of queen mother to the status of queen-regent. As so often in Swazi politics, the death of the king immediately raises the dual problem of who should succeed, and who should be queen mother. Swazi tradition (enigmatic as it is), answered this question in a roundabout way. First, the widows of the king are carefully scrutinized

⁵⁸Jones, Register, p. 457. For a discussion of the issues involved in the widening gap between Mbandzeni and Sisile, see Bonner, Kings, pp. 161-163.

by the Inner Council (*Liqogo*) with a view to selecting one of them who had a "good character"-- defined primarily as kindness and generosity."⁵⁹ Once such a widow had been identified, then her sons were examined as suitable candidates for kingship.⁶⁰ Ideally, the condition was that the successful candidate should have no male siblings. The condition was intended to prevent a queen mother from aiding "a favoured younger son to usurp the birthright of the older brother."⁶¹ But in practice this requirement was not strictly adhered to. The main consideration during the selection process was the character and credibility of the queen mother. For example, King Mbandzeni's son Masumphe from his wife Ncenekile had a stronger claim to the throne on the grounds of eligibility after Mbandzeni's death. However, he was ignored "because of the violent temper of his mother." Instead, Bhunu, another son of Mbandzeni from another wife,

⁵⁹Kuper, *Aristocracy*, pp. 103-104. Reference to tradition or an unwritten constitution to justify the rulers' actions usually mystifies the actions of the rulers over the ruled. Besides the point that tradition is vulnerable to manipulation, it could also be used against the interests of the masses, especially in monarchical and patriarchal settings like Swaziland where the interpretation of tradition is the monopoly of the aristocracy. For example, see Sobhuza II's views on who are the custodians of the Swazi tradition, particularly, the royal rituals, in Bemeer, "Swazi Rain," *Bantu Studies*, IX (1935), 273. Levin draws our attention to the way Swazi aristocracy has resuscitated and distorted popular indigenous traditions during the colonial era. Richard Michael Levin, "Hegemony and Crisis: Swazi Royal Power in Transition" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Liverpool, 1985), p. 12. For a discussion of the invention of tradition in general and in Africa, see a collection of essays in Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, eds., *The invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983, reprinted 1994).

⁶⁰For a justification that a king should always come from the Dlamini royal house, see Kuper, *Aristocracy*, p. 105.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, p. 55. Labotsibeni attempted to flout this Swazi tradition when she preferred her younger son Malunge over Bhunu.

Labotsibeni, was selected to succeed Mbandzeni.⁶²

Once inside the royal circles, Labotsibeni rose quickly to become a significant figure in King Mbandzeni's political career. He consulted her on crucial matters. She rose to high echelons of power and became the main queen to the displeasure of the other king's wives.⁶³ She inherited the rain-making medicine after the death of Mbandzeni's wife who was responsible for rain ceremonies. Thereafter she claimed to be the only person who knew the secret of rain-making medicine. By this claim, she laid her hands on one of the most potent levers of royal power, because rain-making was one of the most important functions performed by the royalists.⁶⁴ In his study of kingship in the Southeastern Sudan, Simon Simonse notes that the transfer of the knowledge and tools to make rain to the queen-widow after the death of the king simultaneously implied a transfer of power.⁶⁵ This could also be said of the queen mother in Swaziland.

Rain-making was one of the most important functions performed by Swazi kings. Indeed, as an institution, it was the underpinning of Swazi royalty. First, the kings derived economic and political benefits from it. That is, they received various goods and

⁶²Jones, Register, p. 121.

⁶³The views of the king's wives regarding the rise of one of them to a position of queen mother are still largely unknown in the Swazi context. This is one of the areas where Margaret Jean Hay's call for the use of archival and oral sources in the study of women's history could be useful. See Margaret Jean Hay, "Queens, Prostitutes and Peasants: Historical Perspectives on African Women, 1971-1986," Canadian Journal of African Studies, 22, 3 (1988), 436.

⁶⁴Watts, Swaziland, pp. 37-38.

⁶⁵Simonse, Kings of Disaster, pp. 294 & 282. For a discussion of the significance of rain-making in legitimizing kingship in the Southeastern Sudan, see *ibid.*, chapter fourteen.

services in return for rain making.⁶⁶ The kings then turned around and used these economic resources for purposes of patronage to further their political support. Belief in their ability to make or withhold rain forced people to be deferential or even subservient to them. Elsewhere in Africa scholars have observed that the belief in the kings' power to make rain was significant in organizing communal life and therefore became "the object of intense political rivalry."⁶⁷ In addition to rain making, Labotsibeni also claimed to possess certain witchcraft. Consequently she was "feared by the people for her sorceries" and was respected for her unquestionable skills in ruling men.⁶⁸ A Swazi historian reports that King Mbandzeni used to invite Labotsibeni to be part of his entourage when meeting Europeans at his headquarters.⁶⁹ Evidently such meetings enabled Labotsibeni to accumulate a crucial repertoire of political knowledge about the affairs of Swaziland, a knowledge which would not only be valuable for her task as the queen mother and queen regent, but also a knowledge that would elevate her above any of the queens' understanding of the politics of the country. Here, one could argue that by inviting Labotsibeni to such meetings Mbandzeni was already positioning her for the position of queen mother should he die before her.

Because of the above-mentioned qualities, Labotsibeni was able to entrench herself firmly as one of the main participants in the history of Swazi kingship. Therefore,

⁶⁶Watts, Swaziland, p. 38.

⁶⁷See, for example, Simonse, Kings of Disaster, pp. 8 & 1.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁶⁹Matsebula, History, p. 150.

when Mbandzeni died in 1889, she was chosen as queen mother (*Indlovukazi*), even though her selection was contrary to the Swazi traditional law of succession. Once she had been selected, her son, Bhunu, was chosen as heir apparent. Labotsibeni had four children⁷⁰ when she was made the queen mother. Some scholars have viewed Labotsibeni's selection as a question of expediency to deal with the new situation that arose from the arrival of European mineral and grazing concessionaires in Swaziland. These observers argue that she was selected for her exceptional political skills and strong character,⁷¹ qualities required to deal with the European threat to the Swazi state's independence. While others have likewise remarked that Labotsibeni's selection as the queen mother was against the Swazi rules of succession, they also remind us that "it is reasonable to suppose that it may be broken again."⁷²

Some inferences and interpretations are in order here regarding Labotsibeni's choice as the queen mother, in spite of the fact that she did not qualify for such a position according to the strict and rigid interpretation of the Swazi rules of succession. First, Labotsibeni's choice must be seen as the continuation of her determination to maintain her aristocratic status, and not to be confined to a lesser status. Let us remember that, as has been discussed above, she was only married to King Mbandzeni after he had attained

⁷⁰She had three sons: Bhunu; Malunge and Lomvazi and a daughter Tongotongo. See Jones, Register, p. 400.

⁷¹Booth, Swaziland, p. 39 and Bonner, Kings, p. 104, and chapter 10.

⁷²Brian Allan Marwick, The Swazi: An Ethnographic Account of the Natives of the Swazi Protectorate (London: Frank Cass, 1966), p. 257.

his status as king of Swaziland. She had refused Mbandzeni's earlier proposal before the latter was nominated for the position of a king. She maintained her aristocratic stature until her death in 1925. Second, she had prepared her way for succeeding to the position of the queen mother long before her husband's death by getting hold of the rain-making medicine after the death of Mbandzeni's wife who used to possess such knowledge; by rising to a position of prominence to an extent that Mbandzeni consulted her on matters of the state, and by her claim to possess 'witchcraft' powers. Third, it is important to note that Labotsibeni had positioned herself for the highest position that could be attained by a queen in Swazi politics, and yet she did all these without conforming to the control of female sexuality by the royal patriarchs, whereby these patriarchs expected that a queen aspiring to the position of queen mother should have only one son, among other qualifications. Labotsibeni had three sons and a daughter by the time King Mbandzeni died in 1889. Of equal significance is that prior to Labotsibeni's becoming a queen mother the Mdluli clan to which she belonged had no history of providing queen mothers to the royalists. The Mdluli clan's reputation was limited to their military skills.⁷³

In sum, Labotsibeni's hold on the levers of power and her aristocratic self-perception and the fact that she had four children must be understood as her attempts to reshape the kingship, especially its laws of succession. To interpret her rise to the position of queen mother only within the context of Swazi 'traditional' regulations of

⁷³For Mdluli clan's military skills, see Ginindza, "Labotsibeni," in Kaplan, ed., *Queens*, p. 155.

succession is to deny her self-consciousness and strategic planning toward her ambition: to become the queen mother and a co-ruler of the monarchy. Finally, the statement that Labotsibeni's choice for queen mother was tantamount to breaking the Swazi law of succession misses an important aspect of precolonial Swazi laws. The Swazi precolonial laws were fluid, flexible and ambiguous. In the view of one Swazi legal scholar "Swazi law and custom is above all a matter of subtle nuances and shades of emphasis, adapted to addressing social needs as they arise."⁷⁴ It was this adaptability which enabled persons like Labotsibeni to refashion the political institutions of kingship. Like elsewhere in Africa, the codification of Swazi law, especially that branch of law known as 'customary' law, brought rigidity to an otherwise flexible practice. Thus, since the early attempts by British to codify Swazi laws and custom, the emaSwati resented and resisted such attempts, because they were concerned that "the written word [would] introduce an undesirable rigidity into custom."⁷⁵ Indeed, the codified customary law in colonial Africa was a rigid law, without a capacity to address social issues as they arose.

Elsewhere in Africa scholars are beginning to draw attention to the manner in

⁷⁴Thandabantu Nhlapo, Marriage and Divorce in Swazi Law and Custom (Mbabane, Swaziland: Websters, 1992), p. xi.

⁷⁵*Ibid.* For an example of codification of Swazi law of succession in colonial Swaziland, see N.N. Rubin, "The Swazi Law of Succession: A Restatement," Journal of African Law, IX, 2 (Summer 1965), 90-113. (This paper was written as a part of a larger project undertaken by the staff of the Restatement of African Law Project of the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London.) See also J.M.A. Fannin, "Preliminary Notes on Principles of Swazi Customary Law" (Lozitha, Swaziland, 12 December 1967), especially, pp. 17-27. This paper's length is, 1-36. Fannin was a Judicial Commissioner.

which the royalists regulated women's sexuality and to conceptualize women's roles in refashioning kingships. In her study of Buganda's Queen Mother Irene Drusilla Namaganda, 1896-1957, Nakanyike B. Musisi has argued that Namaganda "struggled to reorganize royal women's status in the political machinery on the basis that would defend their gender rights of sexuality, as well as to defend sexual revolutionary change against the chiefs' attacks and control."⁷⁶ Musisi further points out that Namaganda had wished to define herself in wider terms than being merely known as the queen mother. Namaganda, argues Musisi, "never questioned the right of the existence of the institution of kingship; yet at the same time she proved unable to commit herself to the self-sacrifice required by [Buganda] state-politically-defined Queen Mother behavior."⁷⁷ In Namaganda we have therefore a person whose history of dealing with the Buganda monarchy resembles that of Labotsibeni.

Labotsibeni dominated Swazi politics in the period 1890-1921, at the end of which she handed over the reigns of government to her grandson, Sobhuza II. Upon becoming queen mother, she established her headquarters at Zombodze, near the eastern slopes of the Mdzimba Range, away from the Nkanini homestead where queen-regent Tibati Nkambule lived. It was during this period that the actions of the British and the

⁷⁶Nakanyike B. Musisi, "A Personal Journey into Custom, Identity, Power, and Politics: Researching and Writing the Life and Times of Buganda's Queen Mother Irene Drusilla Namaganda (1896-1957)," *History in Africa*, 23 (1996), 379. See also T.C. McCaskie, "State and Society, Marriage and Adultery: Some Considerations Towards a Social History of Precolonial Asante," *Journal of African History*, 22 (1981), 477-494.

⁷⁷Musisi, "A Personal Journey," *History in Africa*, 23 (1996), 380.



Transvaal Boers intensified in Swaziland. Their presence brought tension between the queen regent and the *Indlovukazi*, as the latter became more active in opposing European attempts to bring Swaziland under the Transvaal Boer administration.⁷⁸

Summary

In this chapter we have seen that the queen mothers and queen regents were important participants in Swazi kingship. They contributed to bringing about political stability within the aristocracy of Swaziland. First, through marriage, queens and queen mothers linked chiefly families from inside and outside the borders of Swaziland to the Swazi royalists. In so doing, they minimized tendencies of military invasions to the Swazi state. The fact that the Swazi kings continued to have their queen mothers from the Ndwandwe chiefdom in northern Zululand is just one example that shows the Swazi royalists' concern with security affairs when choosing wives. Second, queens played a crucial role by limiting the number of contenders to the throne upon the death of the king. For example, the prince's candidacy for the throne was based on the qualifications and status of his mother. Thus, the princes from the Matsebula and Motsa queens were automatically known to have no claim on the throne. Similarly, the princes who had male siblings from the same queen were not considered for the throne under normal conditions

⁷⁸Jones, *Register*, p. 400. For a discussion of the British and Transvaal Boers' attempts to impose Transvaal administration on the Swazi state, see Manelisi Genge, "Law and the Imposition of Colonial Rule in Swaziland, 1890 - 1898," MA Thesis (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University, 1992), chapters 3 and 4.

of succession. Thus, queen mothers were the foundations of kingship. However, royal women must not be perceived as representatives of women, but they were accorded political power with the ostensible view to hamstring the otherwise arbitrary rule of the Swazi kings. It is arguable that they were in some sense an aspect of matriarchy⁷⁹ that was imbedded in Swaziland's royal politics. Nevertheless, their positions remained institutionally subordinate to the positions of kings with whom they reigned. Also the fact that a queen mother and a queen regent were the only women allowed active involvement in the highest decision making body of Swazi politics meant that they were constrained from introducing policies which reflect female views. Elsewhere other scholars of power and gender have observed that there ought to be more women in positions of power at a given time, for a fundamental policy change on matters which affect women to occur. Such scholars point out, "the 'first' females in positions of power usually reflect male values because they are chosen and will be kept in their positions only as they reinforce the values of the male."⁸⁰

This chapter has also demonstrated that a study of gender relations in Swaziland should take into account women's class differences. Women from royal circles were influential in various ways, and they formed the basis of traditional authority in

⁷⁹For a critical view of the concept of matriarchy, see Joan Bamberger, "The Myth of Matriarchy: Why Men Rule in Primitive Society," in Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, ed., Woman, Culture, and Society (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1983 reprint, first published in 1974), pp. 263-280.

⁸⁰Rosemarie Skaine, Power and Gender: Issues in Sexual Dominance and Harassment (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 1996), p. 390.

Swaziland. And yet their role in Swazi politics is often neglected in the literature which deals with women and politics in Africa.

Chapter Four

SETTING THE POLITICAL SCENE FOR THE SWAZI-ANGLO-BOER RELATIONS, 1880s-1890s

In southern Africa Swaziland has a unique history in the manner by which European colonization was established. One singular feature that distinguished the coming of European colonialism to Swaziland was the absence of military conquest by its colonial powers: the South African Republic (Transvaal), and England, respectively. One scholar has observed that Swaziland was colonized through "paper conquest."¹ This remark has since given rise to studies which focus on the theme of mineral and land concessions in Swaziland.² Yet, neither the notion of paper conquest, nor a discussion of the influx of European concessionaires into nineteenth-century Swaziland, provides a convincing explanation as to why Swaziland alone was able to avoid military conquest by the Boers and British, who employed military power throughout their conquests of African kingdoms in southern Africa. Why did other African kingdoms or societies fail to escape military conquests by Europeans? More significantly, the case of Swaziland takes a peculiar twist when it is compared with the British military subjugation of the

¹Hilda Kuper, An African Aristocracy: Rank Among the Swazi (London: Oxford University Press, 1947, reprinted 1965), p. 20.

²See A.N. Boyce, "The Swaziland Concessions and their Political Consequences 1876-1908" (M.A. thesis, University of South Africa, 1947); Philip Bonner, Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires: The evolution and dissolution of the nineteenth-century Swazi state (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983), and F. Mashasha, "The Road to Colonialism: Concessions and the Collapse of Swazi Independence, 1875-1926" (D.Phil.

Transvaal in 1877 and the defeat of both Oranje Free State and Transvaal Boer Republics, from 1899 to 1902 during what is now referred to as the South African War (formerly the Anglo-Boer War).

The historiography of Swaziland either discusses the coming of Europeans to Swaziland in more general terms or emphasizes the Boer presence and mining capitalists.³ Even when the literature acknowledges the British presence in Swaziland it stresses the introduction of its entrepreneurial class, without a detailed discussion of the Swazi-British relations, especially at interstate level.⁴ We have a reasonable knowledge of the Swazi-Boer relations and to some extent on precolonial Swazi relations with their African state neighbors, and yet relatively little about the Swazi-British relations.⁵ This

thesis, University of Oxford, 1977).

³See Kuper, Aristocracy, chapter II, and Bonner, Kings, chapters, 5, 9 and 10.

⁴See Jonathan Crush, The Struggle for the Swazi Labour, 1890-1920 (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), pp. 34-36; Josiah B. Mlahagwa, "Capital, Class and State in Colonial Swaziland: The Hegemony of Capital and the Demise of Dlamini Power," Research Paper Submitted to the International Development Research Unit, Nairobi, April 1982, pp. 1-4. (A copy of this paper is available at the University of Swaziland Library, Special Collection.), and Manelisi Genge, "Law and the Imposition of Colonial Rule in Swaziland, 1890-1898" (M.A. thesis, Ohio University, Athens, 1992), pp. 37-41.

⁵For a discussion of Swazi-Boer relations, see Noel George Garson, "The Swaziland Question And a Road to the Sea," (M.A. Thesis, University of Witwatersrand) in Archives Year Book for South African History, Vol. II (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1957), pp. 271-274, and Bonner, Kings, chapter 5. For the emaSwati relations with their African neighbors, see P.L. Bonner, "Swazi Relations with their Neighbours, 1840-81," (Paper for discussion in African History Seminar, University of London, October 1968), pp.1-9, and P. Bonner, "The Relations Between Internal and External Politics in Swaziland and the Eastern Transvaal in the Mid-19th Century," (University of London, n.d.), pp. 35-49. (Both Bonner's papers are available at the Special Collection, University

knowledge gap becomes conspicuous when one attempts to understand the emaSwati's experience of and reaction to British colonialism in early twentieth-century Swaziland.⁶ Such an understanding requires a knowledge of the history of the Swazi-British relations in the nineteenth-century. This chapter attempts to address this knowledge gap. It argues that the emaSwati's ability to escape military conquest by Europeans lay, first in their tactic of forming alliances with Europeans against other African societies,⁷ and second, in their country's strategic position, mineral and stock-farming and agricultural land wealth: aspects which were coveted by and elicited mutual jealousy from the Boers and the British.⁸ Of course, later it turned out that the news pertaining to the mineral wealth of Swaziland was exaggerated.⁹ Nevertheless, such news played a significant role as a

of Swaziland Library.)

⁶For an example of this knowledge gap, see Balam Henry Labeja Nyeko, "The Swazi Leadership's Response to Colonial Rule, 1902-1930" (D.Phil. thesis, Makerere University, March 1977).

⁷In this instance the emaSwati resemble the Lozi of the Barotseland who sided with Europeans against other Africans during the conquest phase of the European colonial establishment. For a discussion of the Lozi, see Gerald L. Caplan, The Elites of Barotseland, 1878-1969: A Political History of Zambia's Western Province (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970).

⁸For a discussion of Anglo-Boer rivalry over the strategic position of Swaziland, see Garson, "Swaziland", see also Alan C.G. Best, The Swaziland Railway: A Study in Politic-Economic Geography (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1966), especially chapters I, II, and III. For mineral and land wealth, see Crush, Struggle, 1987), p. 209.

⁹See, F. De Winton, "Report on Swaziland," Enclosure in No. 3, in Command Paper, No. 6201 (London: HMSO, 1890), p. 10. (This report was presented to both Houses of Parliament in Britain in August 1890.) See also T.V. Bulpin, Storm Over the Transvaal (Cape Town: Standard Press, 1955), p. 133. (Bulpin has reproduced his chapter on Swaziland with minor variations in his other work, Lost Trails of the Transvaal).

centripetal force in attracting European fortune-seekers to the country.

During the initial period of the emaSwati contact with the Boers and the British, the emaSwati played one power against the other. It is claimed that at the beginning of the concession era the Swazi leaders continued the strategy of playing the Boers against the British by "complaining to [Sir Hercules Robinson] of the Boers and to the South African Republic of the English, whilst at the same time selling concessions all over the country."¹⁰ However, it ought to be appreciated that the Swazi leaders employed such a strategy during the concessionary era partly out of desperation and pressure for there was an intense competition between the Boers and the British for getting concessions from Swaziland. And these groups perceived themselves along nationalist lines, i.e., Boer versus British.¹¹ For example, in January 1887 Johannes C. Krogh a Boer landdrost (senior district official) of Wakkerstroom district on the eastern Transvaal, sent a message to T.B. Rathbone that "the Swazi King [Mbandzeni] had been granting mining

¹⁰Public Record Office, Colonial Office (C.O.) 2879/37, Africa (South), No. 438 (n.d.), p. 2. Robinson was the Governor of the Cape Colony and the British High Commissioner for South Africa from January 1881 to April 1889. See also Eric A. Walker, A History of Southern Africa (London: Longmans, 1968), p. 417.

¹¹Other historians of Swazi history have observed the existence of the British versus Boer character of factionalism in the affairs of Swaziland only after 1894, when it had already developed into a mature stage. For example, see Balam H.L. Nyeko, "The Swazi Leadership's Response to Colonial Rule, 1902-1930" (D. Phil., Makerere University, 1977), p. 68. In the period of late nineteenth-century European imperial economic expansion the conflict of Europeans along nationalist orientations in the colonies in Africa has been observed by other scholars as well. For example, the German industrialists clashed with the British industrialist in German South West Africa in the 1890s. See Richard A. Voeltz, "The European Economic and Political Penetration of South West Africa, 1884-1892," International Journal of African Historical Studies, 17, 4 (1984), 623-639.

concessions and giving his country away to the English, while they the Transvaal Government and Boers had been left in the dark, and that in consequence of this action of the Swazi king, a commando from the Transvaal Government would be sent in for the purpose of taking the country and annexing it to the Transvaal."¹² Shepstone and other British officials and non-officials considered Krogh's message to Mbandzeni a serious matter which deserved the attention of the British government and that even if the Transvaal government was not directly involved in Krogh's message, the message resembled the strategy which had been used by the Boers to take over the country of the amaZulu. Therefore to avoid a repeat of what the Boers did in Zululand, Shepstone recommended that the British government declare a protectorate over Swaziland.¹³ This

¹²Letter, Mr T.B. Rathbone, Swaziland, to T. Shepstone Jr., Pietermaritzburg, Natal, January 21, 1887 (Government Archives, Pretoria, File No. S.S. 1357, Ref. R1091/87), pp. 34-40. See also Huw M. Jones, A Biographical Register of Swaziland to 1902 (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1993), p. 492. Rathbone is reported to have been a fluent siSwati linguist, a close friend and interpreter of King Mbandzeni and he owned a store near the royal homestead of Ludzidzini. During the time of writing this letter he was acting for Theophilus Shepstone Jr., who was the Resident Agent and Adviser to the Swazi Nation for Mbandzeni. Shepstone had returned to Pietermaritzburg for a short period. For information on Rathbone's involvement in the affairs of Swaziland, see Jones, Register, pp. 491-494.

¹³Minute from the Secretary of Native Affairs to the Governor, Natal, January 31, 1887 (Government Archives, Pretoria, File No. S.S. 1357, Ref. No. R1091/87), pp. 41-45. For other correspondences on this subject, see a letter from Mr. T. Shepstone Jr., to the Secretary for Native Affairs, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, January 29th, 1887 (Government Archives, Pretoria, S.S. 15, Ref. R1091/87), pp. 24-33; copy of a letter from Sir A.E. Havelock, Governor, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, to Sir Hercules Robinson, Governor and High Commissioner for South Africa, Cape Town, 1st February 1887, in *ibid.*, pp. 21-23; a letter from Hercules Robinson to the State President of the South African Republic, Pretoria, 8th February 1887, in *ibid.*, pp. 19-20; letter from Havelock to Robinson, 24th February 1887, in *ibid.*, pp. 49-51 (In this letter Havelock attached another letter which he claims to be a translation of a letter addressed by John Gama as instructed by King

shows that the Anglo-Boer competition contributed in driving the Swazi leaders to adopting the strategy of playing these two powers against each other. Therefore, once these powers resolved their competition over Swaziland, the Swazi strategy of playing each power against the other was also put to an end. In fact, it could be safely argued that the notion of a Swazi strategy of playing the Anglo-Boer powers against each other is not only an understatement of what was actually going on in Swaziland, but it also obscures the degree to which the Swazi leaders were pushed by the activities of the Boers and the British concessionaires to adopt such a strategy of desperation. Furthermore, such a strategy had no precedent in pre-European Swazi politics, therefore, its appearance in Swazi politics must be understood within the context of Anglo-Boer rivalry over Swaziland's economy in the shape of concessions.¹⁴ The Swazi leaders were attempting to do their best to survive in the circumstances. Their situation resembles what has been

Mbandzeni, to the Secretary of Native Affairs with reference to Krogh's message to Mbandzeni and "appealing for the intervention of the British Government."), for John Gama see a copy of a letter, John Gama, Swaziland, to Secretary for Native Affairs, 16th January 1887, in *ibid.*, pp. 52-56, see also Jones, Register, p. 245 (Gama had a questionably past: born in 1842, once a member of the Giba Regiment, a devotee of the Rev. J. Allison of the Wesleyan mission station at Mahamba, a Christian educated at Edendale in Natal, close friend of Shepstone Jr., and Krogh refuted his assertions on the grounds that Gama was "formerly a sort of messenger of Bishop Colenso, by whom he was taught, and from whom information obtain by me [Krogh], he is now Shepstone's factotum." For this information and on Gama's life, see Jones, Register, pp. 244-245.), and a letter from Robinson to the State President of the South African Republic, 10th March 1887 (Government Archives, Pretoria, S.S. 1357, ref. R1600/87), pp. 47-48.

¹⁴For a discussion of the Anglo-Boer conflict in Swaziland over its strategic position from the Transvaal to the Delagoa Bay, see Noel George Garson, "The Swaziland Question and A Road to the Sea, 1887-1895" (M.A. Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand), published in Archives Year Book for South African History, Vol. II (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1957).

observed by scholars of European colonialism on 'native Americans' in the United States of America as the "middle ground". One scholar defines the middle ground as "the place in between: in between cultures, peoples, and in between empires and nonstate of villages...It is the area between the historical foreground of European invasion and occupation and the background of Indian defeat and retreat."¹⁵

But, once the strategy of playing the Anglo-Boers against each other was rendered ineffective by these powers, the Swazi leadership developed a strategy of knowing when to stand up against or to back down in the face of a European advance. Swazi history had a precedent for employing such a strategy. During the early phase of the history of Swazi nation-building and expansion King Sobhuza I (also known as Somhlolo) crafted a method of dealing with adversaries. His tactic was to "give a bulldog a bone to chew then proceed to manuvre [sic] until you are established" or "lie down when a bulldog charges."¹⁶ This means to please a powerful counterpart by giving him/her something to keep him/her content while one is maneuvering to gain a strategic position or does no

¹⁵Richard White, The middle ground: Indians, empires, and republics in the Great Lakes region, 1650-1815 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, reprinted 1995), p. X.

¹⁶Quoted in Arthur Mag. (Magagula) Dlamini, "Expansion and Survival Policy of the Swazi Nation," unpublished paper (University of Swaziland, Special Collection, n.d.), p. 2. For the early history of Swazi nation building and expansion, see Philip Bonner, "Early State Formation among the Nguni: The Relevance of the Swazi Case" (African History Seminar paper, University of London, January 1978), pp. 1-15 (a copy of this paper is available at the University of Swaziland Library), and Philip Bonner, "Factions and Fissions: Transvaal/Swazi Politics in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," Journal of African History (hereafter JAH), XIX, 2 (1978), 219-238. For the emaSwati's playing of the British against the Boer power, see "The Swaziland Question," in African (South), No. 438, Printed for the use of the Colonial Office, CO879/37, p. 2.

fight a powerful opponent, in order to avoid to be overwhelmed by the former. In the world of diplomatic relations between King Sobhuza I and King Shaka of the Kingdom of Zululand (about 1815) this meant that the former had to please the latter so that Sobhuza could build his kingdom through territorial expansion to the north-west, in Swaziland, without invoking displeasure from Shaka. Sobhuza did this by offering two of his sisters Lonkulumo and Mphandzese as wives to Shaka. Thus Shaka was placated while Sobhuza quietly expanded his kingdom to the north by incorporating the Sotho people and enlarging his army.¹⁷

Apart from the strategy itself, it is instructive to make two observations about the position of women in the precolonial interstate diplomatic relations. First, Sobhuza's mother Somnjalose was herself brought to Swaziland as a wife to Sobhuza's father with the object of using her as base upon which to develop sound relations between the two countries. Second, by giving his two sisters to Shaka as wives, Sobhuza was strengthening the existing relations between the two countries. Yet, on both counts these women were used as pawns in interstate politics, because the purposes of their being married to the respective individuals did not originate from themselves. The fact that they apparently accepted the marital arrangements as *fait accompli* ought not to be taken to mean that such arrangements were necessarily in their interests as well. At best, these women could be considered to have been contents of a diplomatic pouch in a men's world of politics.

¹⁷Dlamini, "Expansion," p. 2. For another example, where Sobhuza I chose not to fight a powerful opponent, see Matsebula, *History*, p. 20.

The time-honored Swazi method of dealing with adversaries as discussed above was recently invoked by the late King Sobhuza II when he reminded the emaSwati that King Sobhuza I had "forewarned us [Swazi leaders] to be patient and cautious when dealing with the affairs of this land."¹⁸ In general, a diplomatic history of precolonial African states is still a largely under researched theme. Elsewhere in the continent scholars are beginning to re-explore this kind of history in a more sustained and elaborate manner than the earlier attempts.¹⁹

The discussion in this chapter is informed by analytical insights gained from other scholars who have explored situations of power relations. In his study of power relations among the Malay villagers in Malaysia (Southeast Asia), James C. Scott employs the concepts of public and hidden transcripts to unmask power relations between the powerful and subordinates. He defines public transcript as "the self-portrait of dominant elites as they would have themselves seen. It is designed to be impressive, to affirm and naturalize the power of dominant elites, and to conceal or euphemize the dirty linen of

¹⁸King Sobhuza II: A Speech for His Majesty the King to be broadcast on Independence Day, 8:00 p.m, September 6 (Note, the year does not appear on this document). (J.S.M. Matsebula Papers, Special Collection, University of Swaziland), p. 2.

¹⁹See Joseph K. Adjaye, Diplomacy & Diplomats in 19th Century Asante (Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press, 1996), and Lucie Ann Gallistel Colvin, Kajor and Its Diplomatic Relations with Saint-Louis Du Senegal, 1763-1861 (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1972, reproduced by University Microfilms International: Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1978. For Ethiopia, see Harold G. Marcus, "Ethio-British Negotiations Concerning the Western Border with Sudan, 1896-1902," *JAH*, IV, 1 (1963), 81-94, and Sven Rubenson, "The Protectorate Paragraph of the Wichale Treaty," *JAH*, V, 2 (1964), 243-283. For an earlier attempt on this theme for the period, late 19th century on eastern Rhodesia and southern Mozambique, see Douglas Wheeler, "Gungunyane the Negotiator: A Study in African Diplomacy," *JAH*, IX, 4 (1968), 585-602.

their rule."²⁰ The dominant and subordinate meet in a public forum. However, the public transcript only partially reveals the nature of the often well guarded power relations.²¹ "It is frequently in the interest of both parties to tacitly conspire in misrepresentation."²² Scott further argues that "a comparison of the hidden transcript of the weak with that of the powerful and of *both* hidden transcripts to the public transcript of power relations offers a substantially new way of understanding resistance to domination."²³ As is evident in the case of Swazi-Anglo-Boer relations "the analyst in any situation like this has a strategic advantage over even the most sensitive participants precisely because the hidden transcripts of dominant and subordinate are, in most circumstances, *never in direct contact*. Each participant will be familiar with the public transcript and the hidden transcript of his or her circle, but not with the hidden transcript of the other."²⁴ Shula Marks, for her part, reminds scholars of the importance of looking "beneath the language with which politicians obscure their motives" in their (scholars') attempts to reconstruct

²⁰James C. Scott, Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 18. For an earlier discussion of subordinates' strategies of resistance, see also James C. Scott, Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). (I wish to thank Professor Gail M. Gerhart for drawing my attention to Scott's work in 1996 when I was conducting fieldwork for this study.)

²¹Scott, Domination, p. 3.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 2.

²³*Ibid.*, p. xii.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 15. Emphasis in the original.

political history.²⁵ Here Marks draws attention to the deceptive nature of some of the political statements. David Nyberg, on the other hand, views deception “to be normal rather than abnormal, a workaday attribute of practical intelligence.”²⁶ But he, like Marks, emphasizes the significance of detecting deception and its motives when reconstructing the past. In their sum, these insights on language and power inform this chapter and the subsequent ones.

A brief remark on the Transvaal Boers' and the British colonial adventures in southern Africa and terminology I use in referring to them is in order here. The Boers have been a peculiar colonial power²⁷ in the context of European colonialism in southern Africa ever since their break away from the Dutch East India Company rule in the Cape Colony in the eighteenth century. They have undergone major transformations in their attempts to indigenize themselves to the African continent. For example, they changed their collective national identity from Dutch to Cape Patriots, Voortrekkers, Boers and

²⁵Shula Marks, “Review Article: African and Afrikaner History,” Journal of African History, XI, 3 (1970), 438.

²⁶David Nyberg, The Varnished Truth: Truth Telling and Deceiving in Ordinary Life (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, first published 1993, and paperback 1994), p.1. For another insightful work on deception and political statements, see Alan B. Spitzer, Historical Truth and Lies about the Past: Reflections on Dewey, Dreyfus, de Man, and Reagan (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

²⁷Generally colonialism is defined variously and broadly by scholars. The Boer colonialism in South Africa falls with the category of internal or settler colonialism. For a definition of colonialism see, Jurgen Osterhammel (translated from German by Shelley L. Frisch), Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1997, first pub. 1995), pp. 15-18, and Ronald J. Horvath, “A Definition of Colonialism,” Current Anthropology, 13, 1 (February 1972), 45-58.

later to Afrikaners, which is an English equivalent of Africans. That they were predominantly a farming community in their economic activities, led to their retention of the name Boer, which has its origins from the Dutch language where it means a farmer. In this dissertation I use the label Boer instead of Afrikaners to refer to the European inhabitants of the South African Republic.

They migrated from their initial entry point in South Africa, the western Cape or Cape Town, to be exact, to places like Natal, Orange Free State and the Transvaal also known as the South African Republic where they established their own Republics by conquering local Africans. One of the driving forces behind their migration from the Cape Colony was their desire to avoid British authority. Therefore, they were in search of a land upon which to establish a new state for themselves in what later emerged as South Africa in 1910. And as it had happened in other parts of the world, their attempts at state formation in the various places in the interior brought about socio-political and economic disruptions to the established African societies in southern African. In their sum, these upheavals gave rise to what recently became a most debatable phase in South African historiography, a phase which for a long time has been referred to by historians as the so-called *Mfecane*.¹²⁸

The Boers established their first state, the Republic of Natalia, in Natal after they

²⁸For a debate on the so-called '*Mfecane*,' see a collection of essays in Carolyn Hamilton, ed., The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995). For an argument which triggered this debate, see Julian Cobbing, "The Mfecane as Alibi: Thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolompo," *IAH*, 29 (1988), 487-519.

had defeated King Dingane of the amaZulu in 1838.²⁹ This Boer state lasted for a short period for it was taken over by the British in 1842 and became the British colony of Natal. Then the Natal Boers migrated to the interior of South Africa to join other Boers who had migrated there from the British Cape Colony. In 1852 the British recognized the first independent Boer state in the interior known as the South African Republic, often called the Transvaal because of its location across the Vaal River. It is the Boers from this state who later competed with the British over Swaziland. Long before the official recognition of the South African Republic by the British in 1852 the Boers in the Transvaal had entered into treaty arrangements, including both defensive and offensive military alliances, with Swazi leaders.³⁰ In 1854 the British recognized another Boer state, the Orange Free State, as an independent Boer Republic. The Boers from the Orange Free State were not concerned with the events which occurred in Swaziland as

²⁹For the evolution of the Afrikaner identity from its Dutch origins, see Marq de Villiers, White Tribe Dreaming: Apartheid's Bitter Roots, Notes of an eighth-generation Afrikaner (Toronto, Canada: Macmillan of Canada, 1987), and John Fisher, The Afrikaners (London: Cassell, 1969). For the history of the establishment of the South African Republic (Transvaal), its attempts to break away from domination by the British, and its policies with regard to Africans in the Republic, see T.V. Bulpin, The Golden Republic: The Story of the South African Republic from its Foundation until 1883 (Cape Town: Citadel Press, n.d); W.J. Leyds, The Transvaal Surrounded: A Continuation of 'The First Annexation of the Transvaal' (London: T. Fisher UNWIN, 1919); H.R. Abercrombie, The Secret History of South Africa: Or Sixty-Five Years in the Transvaal (Johannesburg: The Central News Agency, 1st publ 1951, 2nd edition, 1952), and John Scoble and H.R. Abercrombie, The Rise and Fall of Krugerism: A Personal Record of Forty Years in South Africa (London: Heinemann, 1900). For the Transvaal Boers' treatment of Africans during its early history, see J.A.I. Agar-Hamilton, The Native Policy of the Voortrekkers: An Essay in the History of the Interior of South Africa, 1836-1858 (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1928).

³⁰For Swazi-Boer relations, see Bonner, Kings, chapters 4 and 5.

discussed in this work. But it is important to keep in mind that there was more than one Boer state in the interior of South Africa, and thus in this work I refer to the Transvaal Boers in order to distinguish them from those of the Orange Free State. In spite of the fact that the Boer states were recognized by the British government in 1852 and 1854, they were continuously under threat of being colonized by the British, especially after the discovery of minerals in the interior of South Africa. As one of their strategies to break off from the reliance on the British-controlled seaports of Natal and Cape Town, the Boer states, Transvaal in particular, sought to establish an alternative route to the sea for trading purposes with overseas countries. This led to attempts by the government of the Transvaal to forge ties with the Portuguese at Lourenço Marques on the north southeast of Africa in order to have access to the Delagoa Bay. Swaziland then became an important spot for the Transvaal government for the Transvaal had to pass through it on its way to the Delagoa Bay. Thus, Swaziland became embroiled in the subsequent Anglo-Transvaal rivalry over the latter's attempts to find a sea route for its trade and the British attempts to forestall the Transvaal plans from 1887 to 1895.³¹ From the mid 1880s to 1899 Transvaal was under the leadership of President S.J. Paul Kruger. He suggested to the British government a trade off involving the Transvaal Republic's expansion to the northwest in exchange for the Transvaal take over of Swaziland. This triggered the formation of a Joint Commission by the governments of Britain and the Transvaal over the affairs of Swaziland in 1889. The Commission facilitated the

³¹For a discussion of this see, Garson, "Swaziland Question."

colonization of Swaziland by these powers in the 1890s.

The Boers' colonial adventure was intertwined with the goal of state formation. This generated their desire to physically incorporate some African states to their Republics, and by so doing, to expand the borders of their state. For our case this meant that the Boers' ambitions in Swaziland entailed more than economic interests and an establishment of a European- style government, the major concerns of the British. The Transvaal Boers' primary ambition was the physical extension of their borders to incorporate Swaziland and thereby converting the latter into one of their districts. In this sense of state formation, the Boer experience was similar to those of African societies of the nineteenth-century. One prominent historian of South African history drew attention to this similarity long ago when she wrote:

In the nineteenth-century both African and Afrikaner societies were small-scale, closely knit communities, based on subsistence agriculture, with wealth and prestige concentrated on cattle. Egalitarian, with a large measure of popular pressure on government, both tended to fragment easily and were prone to break up under dominant leaders along lines of kinship. State formation was a key process amongst both, though in a number of areas it can be argued that initially African societies were larger-scale and better organized than those of the trekkers [immigrant Boers].³²

The British, for their part, had a well established tradition of embarking on colonial ventures far away their mother country. They had a well-developed machinery which managed colonies. The Colonial Office in London was responsible for the management of colonies. There was a chain of command in the colonies which reported

³²Shula Marks, "Review Article: African and Afrikaner History," *IAH*, XI, 3 (1970), 439.

directly to the Secretary of State in the Colonial Office.³³ In the case of southern Africa the highest officer which represented the British government regarding colonial matters was the High Commissioner based in Cape Town in the British Cape Colony. The High Commissioner reported directly to the Colonial Office. The High Commissioner had a wide latitude to shape and influence the nature and direction of the policies in the colonies. Below him were various administrators such as the governors and special commissioners who reported directly to him. For our case in Swaziland, from December 1889 the British officials reported directly to the High Commissioner in Cape Town. The High Commissioner had a final word over them on the affairs of Swaziland. Occasionally, there were differences of opinion regarding the colonial policies between the Secretary of State and the High Commissioner. For example, Ripon, Secretary of States differed with Sir Henry B. Loch over the latter's interpretation of the Anglo-Transvaal Convention of 1893 pertaining to the affairs of Swaziland. Ripon telegraphed Loch on this point and informed him of their different views as follows:

I regret, however, to find that on some points you appear to put a different interpretation from my own upon certain provisions of the draft Convention between Her Majesty's Government and the South African Republic recently drawn up at Pretoria. I am advised that the true legal interpretation of those provisions is not in accordance with the views expressed in your letter. And I do not myself understand their meaning as you do.³⁴

³³For a discussion of the chain of command from the Colonial Office to the colonies, see a collection of essays in A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, ed., African in the Colonial Period. III - The Transfer of Power: The Colonial Administrator in the Age of Decolonization (London: University of Oxford, 1979).

³⁴Paraphrased telegraphic message from The Marquess of Ripon, Secretary of States, to Sir H.B. Loch, British High Commissioner in South Africa, 21st August 1893 (CO879/38, Entry 745. S. Enclosure No. 28).

This meant that the British officials in the colonies worked under more stringent conditions, for their decisions and actions were continuously scrutinized by their superiors in the Colonial Office. This was not the case with the officials of the Transvaal government in Swaziland. Thus, on the ground the Transvaal authority was harsher than that of the British. This, however, does not mean that the British were not involved in a colonial venture in Swaziland in the 1890s. Recently, one historian has analyzed the ascendance of European authority over the colonized Africans in colonial Africa. He argues that European colonial authority was a 'racial rule,' i.e., "White gave order, black obeyed. A white skin (more properly, a skin imputed white) conferred authority."³⁵ Of course, the establishment of European 'racial rule' was contested by precolonial African political class, as I demonstrate in this work in the case of Swaziland.

The British have a long history of involvement in colonial ventures in southern Africa since they first came to temporarily occupy the Cape Colony in 1795 at the request of the government of the Netherlands during the Napoleonic Wars in Europe. The Cape was then still under the administration of the Dutch East India Company, which used it as

³⁵Christopher Fyfe, "Race, empire and the historians," Race & Class, 33, 4 (1992), 15. Fyfe challenges historians' neglect of the use of the concept of race in their reconstruction of the history of colonialism in Africa. He makes a persuasive argument on the centrality of race from the European perspective in the development of European administration in colonial Africa. For his argument, see *ibid*, 15-30. Indeed, race has been always a significant factor in various situations where Europeans met non-Europeans and the Europeans had used the race factor to privilege their position over non-Europeans. See for example, Anthony W. Marx, Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and David R. Roediger, The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class (New York: Verso, first publ. 1991, reprinted 1993).

a refreshment station on its trade routes to the Far East. After 1806 the British had developed colonial interests in South Africa. They first established their colonies in the Cape, 1806, and in Natal 1842. For the period covered in this dissertation the British colonial possessions in southern Africa were limited to the Cape, Natal, Botswana (Bechuanaland) and Zimbabwe (Rhodesia). They did not consolidate their colonial possessions in southern African until after the South African War of 1899 to 1902, against the Transvaal and Orange Free State Boers.³⁶

Throughout this work I use the phrase Anglo-Transvaal or Anglo-Boer to refer to

³⁶The story of British colonialism in Africa and southern Africa is well known. For South Africa, see Timothy J. Stapleton, Maqoma: Xhosa Resistance to Colonial Advance, 1798-1873 (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1994); Clifton C. Crais, White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-Industrial South Africa: The making of the colonial order in the Eastern Cape, 1770-1865 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); John Laband, Kingdom in Crisis: The Zulu response to the British invasion of 1879 (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1992); John Laband and Paul Thompson, Kingdom and Colony at War: Sixteen Studies on the Anglo-Zulu War (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1990) Andrew Duminy and Charles Ballard, The Anglo-Zulu War: New Perspectives (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1981); Peter Delius, The Land Belongs To Us: The Pedi Polity, the Boers and the British in the Nineteenth-Century Transvaal (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983); Elizabeth A. Eldredge, A South African Kingdom: The Pursuit of Security in Nineteenth-Century Lesotho (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), and Kevin Shellington, The Colonisation of the Southern Tswana, 1870-1900 (Braamfontein: Ravan Press, 1985). For the British imperialism in southern Africa especially during the period of this dissertation, see C.W. De Kiewiet, The Imperial Factor in South Africa: A Study in Politics and Economics (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966). For the consolidation of the British colonial possessions in South Africa, see Donald Denoon, A Grand Illusion: The Failure of Imperial Policy in the Transvaal Colony During the Period of Reconstruction, 1900-1905 (London: Longman, 1973), and G.H.L. Le May, British Supremacy in South Africa, 1899-1907 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965). For a general account of British colonialism in Africa, see Ronald Robinson, John Gallagher and Alice Denny, Africa and the Victorians: The Climax of Imperialism in the Dark Continent (New York: St. Martins Press, 1961).

actions taken jointly by the governments of Great Britain and the Transvaal. By so doing, I emphasize an official position taken by the officials of these governments which was separate from the actions of individual British and Transvaal subjects who were residents in Swaziland. I also use the name Transvaal instead of South African Republic for brevity.

EmaSwati's Escape of European Conquest by use of Military Power

In nineteenth-century southern Africa, Swaziland rose to prominence as the "principal collaborator" with the Transvaal Boers and the British against other African states.³⁷ However, recently one historian of Swazi history has disputed this point, though he has yet to provide a compelling evidence for his refutation.³⁸ Such a 'collaborative' stance earned the emaSwati an Anglo-Boer guarantee of their independence during the

³⁷Crush, Struggle, p.13. Crush cites Bonner, Kings, p.155. In this sense, the emaSwati compare well with the Lozi of the Barotseland. For a discussion of the Lozi 'collaboration' with Europeans against other Africans, see Gerald L. Caplan, The Elites of Barotseland, 1878-1969: a Political History of Zambia's Western Province (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970). Scholarly insights from elsewhere in Africa reveal that Bonner and Crush have loosely employed the concept of collaboration in their works on Swaziland. One prominent African historian who objects to the use of the term collaboration, defines a collaborator as "somebody who sacrifices the interests of his nation for his own selfish ends." Thus he asserts, "... what these African rulers sought to achieve was not their own selfish ends but in fact the very sovereignty of their state, and what they saw themselves as doing was not collaboration but rather allying with the incoming invaders to achieve this national end." See A. Adu Boahen, African Perspectives on Colonialism (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 41.

³⁸Hamilton Sipho Simelane, "Swazi Resistance to Boer Penetration and Domination, 1881-1898," Transafrican Journal of History, 18 (1989), 118 and 142.

Pretoria Convention of 1881 and the London Convention of 1884, conventions which returned the Transvaal from the British rule to the Boers. One could note with curiosity that although Britain felt obliged to honor the amaSwati's military alliance with them against the BaPedi kingdom in 1879, it did so without inviting them to be one of the signatories in these conventions. Therefore, from the beginning of what turned out to be the cornerstone of the Swazi-British relations, the Anglo-Transvaal powers made an undertaking of preserving the independence of Swaziland to be exclusively their own affair by excluding the amaSwati as active participants. Thus the foundation of a hidden transcript from the point of view of the authorities of Swaziland was established, as far as the ultimate British agenda on Swaziland was concerned. Similarly, since it was the British who were honoring their Swazi military alliance, the Transvaal government did not originate nor comprehend fully the emerging hidden transcript which was to shape British interest in Swaziland from the 1880s until 1968 when Swaziland finally became independent from the British colonial rule. This situation resembles what Scott observes of power relations, i.e., "the powerful, for their part, also develop a hidden transcript representing the practices and claims of their rule that cannot be openly avowed."³⁹ Here

³⁹Scott, Domination, p. xii. For a discussion of the amaSwati military alliance with Europeans, see Bonner, Kings, pp. 139-159; J.S.M. Matsebula, A History of Swaziland (Cape Town: Longman, 3rd ed., 1988), pp. 75-81, and Manelisi Genge, "The Role of the amaSwazi in the Destruction of the BaPedi State, 1876-1879" (Seminar Paper in African History, Michigan State University, Fall Semester, 1993), pp. 1-30. See also T.V. Bulpin, Lost Trails of the Transvaal (Cape Town: Books of Africa, 2nd ed., 1969), pp. 189-191. The amaSwati leaders like King Mbandzeni and others after him were fond of making reference to their military assistance to Europeans, the British and the Boers, when they appealed for a better treatment by either of these powers. See, for example, letters from Mr. T.B. Rathbone, Swaziland, to Mr. T. Shepstone (Jr.), Pietermaritzburg, January 21,

let us take a short detour to discuss an aspect which preceded the signing of these Conventions, for it illuminates some benchmarks in the emerging Swazi-British relations.

The British officials' initial dealings with the emaSwati, especially immediately after the Anglo-Swazi military defeat and destruction of the BaPedi kingdom in 1879, were characterized by discordance between that which was pronounced on paper and with the actual events on the ground. And this was made more apparent in the work of the Boundary Commission of 1880. Immediately after this defeat, the British administration in the Transvaal under General Sir Garnet J. Wolseley as governor, set up a commission to delineate a boundary between the Transvaal and Swaziland. The Commission was composed of the following persons: for the British side, Major James Alleyne of Royal Artillery, G.M. Rudolph, Landdrost (Magistrate), Utretch, and R.P. Littledale, Royal Engineers, and for the Swazi side, Madolo Dlamini, Mhlaba, and Magwazidili Dladla (and these were the appointees of the Swazi King). It was headed by Alleyne. In spite of the presence of the Swazi representatives in the Boundary Commission, the Swazi had no power, because the final say resided with Wolseley alone, and even King Mbandzeni did

1887, and from Mr. T. Shepstone, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, on behalf of the Swazi King, to Secretary for Native Affairs, January 29, 1887. Both letters are in Government Archives, Pretoria, File No. S.S. 1357, Ref. No. R1091/87. Rathbone was King Mbandzeni's trusted interpreter. The main object of these letters was to appeal to the British Natal authorities to restrain Johannes C. Krogh, landdrost of Wakkerstroom, Transvaal, who had threatened to attack King Mbandzeni on behalf of the Transvaal Government for granting concessions in Swaziland to the British. For the emaSwati military assistance to the Transvaal Boers against the BaPedi King Sekhukhune, see "Swaziland: Notes on the Political Situation, Topographical Features of the Country and Routes" (Prepared by the Field Intelligence Department, Army Headquarters, Pretoria, 20th September 1900), pp. 67-74.

not have a last word on the work of this Commission. We can therefore conclude that the Swazi representatives were not full members of the Commission.

With fresh memories of the valuable military services provided by the emaSwati to the British against the BaPedi, Wolseley instructed the Boundary Commission to be considerate in dealing with the emaSwati. Through his private secretary, Wolseley informed that Commission, that it was "most essential for every reason that we [the British government] should keep the Swazis as our firm friends. Our recent operations in Sikukuni's country have had the effect of cementing a friendship between them and us which it is most expedient to maintain."⁴⁰ This cautionary statement was intended to restrain the Commission from taking any step that might be unfavorable to the emaSwati regarding their land claims in the Komati valley. Wolseley informed the Commission to report to him any reasonable Swazi objections to its work before it made its final decision. He emphasized the importance of maintaining British integrity when dealing with the emaSwati, when he said, "while it is desirable to re-establish the old Boer boundary in the Komati valley, it is still more desirable that the Swazis should look upon us as firm and honest friends incapable of spoiling them of their just possessions."⁴¹

⁴⁰Letter, St. Leger, Wolseley's Private Secretary, to Major Alleyne, Pretoria, January 3, 1880, Enclosure 2, in No. 17, p. 19. This is in the document marked "Secret: Speaking Note," which refers to seven collections of photostat copies, a-g, 1890 - Border Issues, in J.S.M. Matsebula Collection, Special Collection, University of Swaziland. See also Garson, "The Swaziland Question," p. 279. For the actual work of this Commission, see a document, "Swaziland-Republic of South Africa Boundary," in Matsebula Collection, box no. 8. For a discussion of British delineation of Swaziland boundaries, see Matsebula, *History*, chapter nine.

⁴¹*Ibid.* See also Matsebula, *History*, p. 128.

In spite of these professed fair dealings on paper, Wolesley's decisions on occasions he was consulted by Alleyne were in fact against the emaSwati.⁴² Some Swazi scholars have interpreted such disjunctions as Wolesley's "bluff" of the emaSwati "with his nice expressions of sympathy."⁴³ However, to reduce such discrepancies to be the work of one person, Wolesley or just that of the Commission, is an understatement of the British colonial policy, specifically, and that of power relations in general. First, such discrepancies must be seen as pointers of British diplomacy in their long drawn-out strategy of colonizing Swaziland, where military force was not employed. Second, they reveal the development of a hidden transcript within the camp of the colonizing power, namely, that a hidden transcript was not a public transcript even among the officials connected with the Colonial Office. Third, such a view demonstrates the individual scholar's limitations in understanding the manner in which British colonialism came to Swaziland. Fourth, it must be recognized that Wolesley's statements were intended for the British members in the Commission and not for those representing the emaSwati. Therefore, to argue that Wolesley "bluffed the Swazis with his nice expressions of sympathy" is to read his statement out of context. There is no indication that the emaSwati leaders knew of the existence of such opinions.

The final outcome of the Commission was mainly two fold: first, it took away from the Swazi state economically valuable and strategic frontier lands, such as the

⁴²Matsebula, *History*, p. 128.

⁴³*Ibid.*

Komati Gold Fields and the impregnable mountain range near the Kaap valley and important royal residencies, such as Mjindini, near present-day Barberton, Mekemeke, northeast of Barberton, and Mbhuleni in present-day Carolina district, and gave these to the Transvaal British colony. The emaSwati had hitherto refused to cede some of these areas to the Transvaal Boers. Second, it divided the emaSwati into two geographically distinct locations, those in Swaziland and those in what became part of the eastern Transvaal.⁴⁴ Herein, is therefore traceable the origins of the emaSwati as a nation divided between two countries. Even more, the demarcation of the boundaries of Swaziland by the British Commission must be understood within a broader context of the imposition of European colonial rule and the drawing up of colonial borders in Africa in general.⁴⁵ Swazi historian J.S.M. Matsebula generally misses this fundamental point in his treatment of the history of Swaziland. Even a legal authority who has read Matsebula's work on the borders of Swaziland has suggested a wider reading on this subject,

⁴⁴For portions of territory lost by the emaSwati, see Matsebula, History, chapter nine, and for the economic, strategical value and the emaSwati's earlier refusal to grant some of these lands to the Boers, see William Jesser Coope, Swaziland as an Imperial Factor (London: James Barker & Co., circa 1892.), p. 10. Coope's work is found at the South African Library, Cape Town. And for a discussion of a divided Swazi nation, see Hugh MacMillan, "A Nation Divided?: The Swazi in Swaziland and the Transvaal, 1865-1986," in Lerol Vail, ed., The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, paperback), pp. 289-323, and Garson, "The Swaziland Question," pp. 273-279. For both outcomes, see also, Leroy Vail and Landeg White, Power and the Praise Poem: Southern African Voices in History (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), p. 157.

⁴⁵For a discussion of demarcation of political boundaries worldwide, see J.R.V. Prescott, Political Frontiers and Boundaries (Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1987), and colonial boundaries and their post-colonial complications in Africa in general, see chapter 10.

especially on other African colonial boundaries, for a better understanding of colonial boundaries in Swaziland.⁴⁶

The renaming of the vicinities of the royal residences as Barberton and Carolina, names which have endured to this day, ought to be seen as typical European colonial tendencies of superimposing their presence on local conditions. The renaming of places had the intended effect of burying and removing from memory the precolonial history from the consciousness of the colonizer. And in most colonial situations, the loss of precolonial names of places and even names of people lasted only for the duration of the colonial period. In most parts of postcolonial Africa there reemerged the renaming or restoration of place-names and reassertion of African names following the end of colonial

⁴⁶See G.I.A.D. Draper's Comments on "Considerations Supporting the Desirability [sic] of Incorporating Kangwane and Related Areas into Swaziland," A paper to be submitted by the Government of Swaziland to the Government of the Republic of South Africa, 1984 (J.S.M. Matsebula Collection, Special Collection, University of Swaziland), pp.1-18. For further comments on Swaziland's eagerness to regain some territories which it claims it had lost to South Africa during the colonial period, see G.I.A.D. Draper's Confidential Comments on, "Why Ingwavuma is part of Swaziland." (Draper addressed his comments to the Hon R.V. Dlamini, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mbabane, Kingdom of Swaziland (Matsebula Collection, 26-ix-1983), pp.1-15; G.I.A.D. Draper, "Ingwavuma Paper: Comments," sent to the Hon. R.V. Dlamini, (Professor Draper was based in Sussex, England. Matsebula Collection, 26 September 1983), pp.1-2, and J. Thorpe, "Private and Confidential Memorandum" to R.V. Dlamini (Matsebula Collection, January 24, 1984), pp. 1-2. Indeed, restoration of lands ceded to South Africa by the British has been one of Sobhuza II's major ambitions. For an early rejection of such attempts, see D.L. Smith, Pretoria, to Bruton, 28th July 1939 (Matsebula Collection). For an insightful observation of the social break-up of families by arbitrarily drawn colonial boundaries by Europeans in Swaziland, an observation which of course resonates in most colonial situations: that of dividing families into more than one country, see King Sobhuza II, "Speech Made by Ngwenyama at Masundwini on 23rd May 1960" (Matsebula Collection), pp. 10-11. In this speech Sobhuza was addressing both Swazi Council members and the British Advisory Council on how best to prepare themselves for the coming independence of Swaziland.

rule. A case in point in Swaziland is the renaming of the colonial Bremersdorp (town) as Manzini. There are numerous examples which could be marshaled to support the above point. But the important point here is that my point supports J.F.A. Ajayi's earlier observation that the history of European colonialism was just an episode in African history. It does not constitute the whole history of Africans even during the colonial period.⁴⁷

The Swazi King Mbandzeni resigned himself only to verbal contestation of the British Commission's reduction of the boundaries of his country. In this sense, the history of Swaziland's leaders in their dealings with the encroachment of European colonialism, especially regarding the drawing of colonial boundaries, contrasts greatly with that of the amaXhosa leaders on the Eastern Cape, where Europeans (British and the Dutch who later renamed themselves Afrikaners or Boers) met with military resistance.⁴⁸

It is inaccurate to explain Mbandzeni's acceptance of the new boundaries of Swaziland as

⁴⁷For a discussion of this point by Ajayi, see J.F.A. Ajayi, "Colonialism: An Episode in African History," in L.H. Gann and P. Duignan, eds. Colonialism in Africa, 1879-1960, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 497-509, and J.F.A. Ajayi, "The Continuity of African Institutions under Colonialism," in T.O. Ranger, ed., Emerging Themes in African History (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968), pp. 189-200.

⁴⁸For Mbandzeni, see Macmillan, "A Nation Divided?," in Vail, ed. Tribalism, p. 291. For the amaXhosa leaders' handling of frontier zones against Europeans, see Timothy J. Stapleton, Magoma: Xhosa Resistance to Colonial Advance, 1798-1873 (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1994); Les Switzer, Power and Resistance in an African Society: The Ciskei Xhosa and the Making of South Africa (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), chapter 2; Noel Mostert, Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People (Johannesburg: Pimlico, 1992), and Clifton C. Crais, White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-Industrial South Africa: The Making of the Colonial Order in the Eastern Cape, 1770-1865 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), chapter, 6.

a manifestation of his “shrewd diplomacy” and to declare that through such a stance, “he made history in southern Africa,” as Matsebula asserts.⁴⁹ Instead, an explanation of such behavior ought to be traced first, from the emaSwati’s history of dealing with matters of state security and their belief in the British words. For instance, when Mbandzeni allowed the British to reduce his northern boundary by taking away the Kaap valley and the fortified mountain range beyond it to the British Transvaal, he did so on the understanding that this area would “be occupied by the British as a barrier between him and the Boer inhabitants of the Transvaal. The Swazies gave it up because they thought they were *safe in the hands of their friends the British*.”⁵⁰

Of course, the Swazi kings are known for placing significance on the creation of buffer settlements between them and their adversaries. For example, in the 1870s they established buffer settlements by settling Boers to the north of the Pongola River, on Swaziland’s southern border and at the Mahamba frontier.⁵¹ The permanent loss of the Kaap valley and the fortified mountain range beyond it to the Transvaal sunk into the emaSwati minds when the British handed over an enlarged Transvaal to the Boers without restoring the territories they had taken from the emaSwati through the work of the 1880 Boundary Commission.⁵² By so doing, the British betrayed the emaSwati to the

⁴⁹Matsebula, History, p. 130.

⁵⁰Coope, Swaziland, p.12. Emphasis added.

⁵¹Hugh Macmillan, “From Mswati II to Sobhuza II: The Swazi Nation from 1865-1899” (Unpublished paper, n.d., Special Collection, University of Swaziland), p. 8.

⁵²Coope, Swaziland, p. 12.

Transvaal Boers and revealed their duplicity in their dealings with the emaSwati.

Second, Mbandzeni's position could be explained by reference to the emaSwati's earlier history of military collaboration with the British and the Boers against other African states. Such a history of collaboration had provided the emaSwati with an opportunity to measure the military capability of Europeans as compared with theirs. Third, by this time (1880) most of the African kingdoms in southern African had been subjugated by the British military power through contests, in some of which the emaSwati were either actively involved or were on stand-by. Therefore, given British military strength, the emaSwati had no choice but to comply with the British decisions; their realistic options for protests were limited to verbal protest only.

Scholars of military history remind us that war "is a drastic means of testing a power relationship."⁵³ Nations go into war against each other only if each nation thinks it has a comparative advantage over the other at a specifically given time. Thus, "wars can only endure so long as the antagonists persist in thinking it more worthwhile to fight than to negotiate or submit."⁵⁴ However, "when a state is confronted by a better equipped and organized armed force against which it finds it difficult to protect itself with success, it is in danger of losing not only its autonomy, but its corporate identity as well."⁵⁵ This

⁵³This is Laband's interpretation of C. von Clausewitz, On War. See John Laband, Kingdom in Crisis: The Zulu response to the British invasion of 1879 (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1992), p. 2.

⁵⁴Laband, Kingdom, p. 2.

⁵⁵For this Laband cites William McNeill, The Pursuit of Power, see *ibid.*, p. 3.

situation speaks also to that of Swaziland under King Mbandzeni's leadership.

Mbandzeni was aware of the insecurity of his kingdom, which was brought about by European concessionaires. He was willing to behave as was expected of him by concessionaires: but in granting concessions to them, he simultaneously expressed the dilemma in choosing this option, with words which smack of desperation as well as with cynicism: "I know the concessions are bad, but I have white men all around me. *By force they have taken the countries of all my neighbors*. If I do not give them rights here they will take them. Therefore, I give them and they pay. *Why should we not eat before we die.*"⁵⁶ These words speak also to Mbandzeni's dealing with the British Boundary Commission of 1880. And of even more significance for this work, such words reveal a hidden transcript which motivated him to grant concessions.

In dealing with this Commission, Mbandzeni had no option but to agree with the terms dictated to him regarding the newly drawn borders of his country. And he could only be admired for his finesse in knowing when to back down, instead of taking arms against the British, who were determined to deprive him of some important territories of his country, which they expropriated from him and ceded to the then British Transvaal colony. The threat of war or the use of force by European concessionaires which Mbandzeni referred to, had been provided for in one of the concessions. For instance, a concession granted to Messrs Jules Porges and Hermann Eckstein, who were also holders

⁵⁶Quoted by Bulpin, *Storm*, p.148. Emphasis added. Potholm has also used Bulpin's quote, but he wrongly cited a page reference as 142, instead of 148, see Christian P. Potholm, *Swaziland: The Dynamics of Political Modernization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 10.

of other concessions, stipulated that “should any of these concessions be menaced, they have the right, if necessary, to use force of arms and call in the aid of foreign powers to maintain their rights.”⁵⁷ Such a clause was a threat to the sovereignty of the Swazi state, as well. And by 1889, the Swazi state’s military power was about 8,000 to 10,000 men.⁵⁸ Therefore, it had no capability to stage a military resistance to such an overt threat, even if it wanted to do so.

Recently, scholars of southern Africa have begun to consider the feeling of national insecurity as a context within which to examine the making of European colonial order.⁵⁹ However, scholars of Swazi history have so far tended to shy away from emphasizing the feeling of insecurity in nineteenth-century Swaziland following the coming of European concessionaires. For example prominent historian Philip Bonner omitted from his use of the same quotation the part in which Mbandzeni articulated the military threat from the concessionaires. This is not a slight omission, for what is quoted by Bonner decontextualizes Mbandzeni’s statement by suggesting that he was merely overwhelmed by concessionaires’ “paper conquest,” whereas it was in fact the military threat that played a major role in his signing of papers giving away concessions to

⁵⁷Minutes of Proceedings of the Swazieland Joint Commission, Second Meeting, Embekelweni, 5th December 1889, in Annexures to Sir F. De Winton’s Report, Command. 6201, pp. 31-32.

⁵⁸De Winton, “Report on Swaziland,” Command. 6201, p. 8.

⁵⁹See for example, Elizabeth A. Eldredge, A South African Kingdom: The pursuit of security in nineteenth-century Lesotho (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), especially chapters 1 and 14.

Europeans. And scholars of Swazi history are now beginning to draw our attention to the military aspect, which loomed behind the "paper conquest."⁶⁰ Elsewhere in Africa, scholars have observed a significant role played by the military in the expansion of the British empire. They draw our attention to the actual and potential use of military force in the Great Lakes region, East African and southern Africa.⁶¹

Towards the end of his life, Mbandzeni perceived the concessionaires with scepticism and as people who were all out to destroy his kingdom. Concessionaires followed him to his death-bed with concession papers to sign, and among such concessionaires was David Forbes, Jr., better known to the emaSwati as *Mahleko*, son of an earlier concessionaire. When Forbes asked Mbandzeni to sign papers, the latter is reported to have responded by saying, "You too, Mahleko, son of my old friend, are you also joining the vultures that want to pick my bones before I die? I did not expect it of you."⁶² Here the hidden transcript came to the surface as far as Mbandzeni's view of the concessionaires. He considered them as destroyers of the Swazi state. And indeed, in the long-term, their presence in Swaziland brought about calamities to the country, for it was largely due to their economic interests that Swaziland became colonized, first by the

⁶⁰For example, see M.H.Y. Kaniki, "The Swazi Monarchy and the Dynamics of Colonialism," Paper presented at the History Research Seminar, University of Swaziland, January 22, 1997, p. 3. And for Bonner's omission, see Bonner, *Kings*, p.189.

⁶¹See D.A. Low, "Lion Rampant," *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, II, 3 (November 1964), 243-3; and Margery Perham, *Africans and British Rule* (London: Oxford University Press, 1943), pp. 52-3.

⁶²Quoted by Bulpin, *Storm*, p. 150.

Transvaal and then by Great Britain. It is reported that Forbes was so embarrassed by Mbandzeni's response that he tore up his paper and left the king alone.⁶³

Since this work is not concerned with the history of concessions in Swaziland, a theme which has received considerable scholarly attention, it does not attempt to retell that history.⁶⁴ Suffice it here to restate that the concessionary era introduced an aspect of power relations which had profound consequences for the Swazi state. The concessions were mainly divided into four categories: mineral, grazing, trading and canteen, which were collectively referred as commercial concessions, and lastly, miscellaneous concessions. Miscellaneous concessions were primarily acquired by adventurers who bought various types of concessions with the view to make profit by reselling them later.

The concession spree was in fact a "business" forced on Mbandzeni by Europeans. This was so in spite of some later accounts which caricature Mbandzeni as having granted concessions "with a recklessness which suggests that he had no idea what he was doing beyond hoping to acquire some European support against his Bantu neighbours."⁶⁵ Africanist of diplomatic history usually debunks this caricaturist view of African kings in their dealings with Europeans in precolonial times.⁶⁶ De Winton who visited Swaziland

⁶³*Ibid.*

⁶⁴See also appendix in this work for a sample of the types, owners, and amount paid for concessions.

⁶⁵M.G. Hodgson, and W.G. Ballinger, "Swaziland," 7/3/1931, p. 9, in A410 A3 Ballinger Papers, Matters of Joint Concern - Protectorates, A3.3.1. Historical and Literary Papers Division, University of the Witwatersrand.

⁶⁶See, for instance, Colvin, *Kajor*, preface, p.1, and Wheeler, "Gungunyane," *IAH*, IX, 4

immediately after Mbandzeni's death, and who also met with the concessionaires, has observed that "it was the desire to please the Whites that caused him to fall into the hands of unscrupulous adventurers, who, under the pretence of friendship, stripped him of all his possession by these so-called concessions."⁶⁷ Of course, it could be argued that an alternative stance such as a refusal to please these Europeans would have proved even more disastrous for the Swazi state, for the emaSwati would have probably been attacked by the countries of origin of the fortune-seekers. At least, this is what had happened with the Transvaal in 1895 (Jameson Raid) and 1899-1902 (South African War), when it had refused to grant voting rights to the "*uitlanders*," - non-Boer aliens, that is, Europeans mainly from Britain.

It is even more remarkable that most of the concessions were recognized and ratified by the Anglo-Transvaal created special Concession Court in Swaziland in 1890. Other scholars have argued that most of these concessions could not have been ratified in an English court of law.⁶⁸ Perhaps, that the majority of these concessions, some of which were acquired under questionable circumstances, were ratified by the Concessions Court held by the Anglo-Transvaal legal authorities, highlights the changing nature of European law as it was exported to the colonies.

(1968), 585.

⁶⁷"Report on Swaziland," by De Winton, Enclosure No. 3, in Command. 6201, p. 9.

⁶⁸John Scoble and H.R. Abercrombie, The Rise and Fall of Krugerism: A Personal Record of Forty Years in South Africa (London: Heinemann, 1900), p. 108. For a discussion of the creation of the 1890 Concession Court and its work, see Genge, "Law," pp. 78-82.

Now, let us return to our discussion of the 1881 and 1884 Conventions. For their part, the emaSwati understood the 1881 and 1884 conventions as the public transcript for both them and the British, and they perceived these conventions as guides for the emerging Swazi-British relations. Thus, they literally interpreted the language of the conventions to mean what it professed: preservation of the independence and integrity of Swaziland by the British and the Boers. Therefore, they regarded any action from these powers which threatened their independence as a violation of the conventions.⁶⁹ The conventions provided the emaSwati with a legal point from which to contest any attempts aimed at undermining their independence. The Pretoria and London conventions and subsequent ones form the basis of the numerous Swazi deputations to Pretoria and England in later years. The Swazi deputations continuously referred to the Anglo-Transvaal undertakings made at such conventions regarding the preservation of the independence of Swaziland.⁷⁰

The British mining and commercial capitalists in England attached a different interpretation from that of the British politicians and the Swazi leaders to clause XII of the London Convention of 1884 which guaranteed the integrity and independence of Swaziland. These capitalists interpreted this clause to mean that Swaziland would never

⁶⁹See Minutes of the Meeting held at Inkanini at 11 a.m. on 18th December, 1889, Annexures to De Winton's "Report on Swaziland," Command. 6201, pp. 45-47. It was attended by the Queen Regent Tibati Madvolomafisha Nkambule, chief councillor Tikhuba Magongo, and the principal chiefs and *indvunas* of the Swazi Nation, and Theophilus Shepstone, Resident Adviser and Agent of the Swazi Nation, and the Anglo-Transvaal Joint Commission. See also "Memorandum" by Theophilus Shepstone, Embekelweni, November 29th, 1889, *ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

become part of the Transvaal. Instead, they foresaw that the country would ultimately become a British possession or protectorate. For example, on December 13th, 1889, William Scott, manager, and Hugh T. McCubbin, inspecting manager, of the Havelock Gold Mining and Exploration Company, Limited, submitted a petition to De Winton against a move to have Transvaal Laws applicable in Swaziland. In their explanation of what motivated their company to invest in concessions in Swaziland, they pointed out, "the Havelock Concession was purchased by the Havelock Gold Mining Company on the faith of the Convention of 1884, whereby the Transvaal Government undertook not to interfere with the integrity of Swazieland [sic], and whereby England also undertook to protect such integrity."⁷¹ Another memorial signed by one hundred and ninety eight British who were in 1889 residents and interest holders in Swaziland expressed a similar view. They wrote to De Winton the following:

[T]hat whereas the undersigned, in reliance on the suzerainty of Her Majesty over South Africa, and on the recognition of the independence of the Swazie [sic] Nation, set forth in the London Convention of 1884, have elected residence in Swazieland for the pursuit of their lawful callings, or have acquired rights and interests in that country...from the Swazi King and nation.⁷²

On the bases of their interpretation of the London Convention of 1884, the British mining and commercial capitalists mainly residing in England floated their companies and rushed to Swaziland for concessions of a duration of fifty years and with provisions for renewal from King Mbandzeni. Then they invested huge sums of money into Swaziland as compared to the Transvaal Boer farmers who used to take their live-stock to Swaziland for winter grazing concessions. For example, Forbes' Reef Gold Mining Company, Limited, had investments of about £190,000 from early 1880s to December

31, 1889, Allister Miller's mineral right concession was estimated at about £275,000 and Havelock, with its headquarters at Liverpool, had £120,000.⁷⁰ Other scholars have estimated investments in Swaziland by British companies based in England in 1890 at over £2million.⁷¹

These investments point to the formal expansion of British imperial rule and must be understood by emphasizing the dominant role of its metropolitan economy in Swaziland. This economy was largely directed by gentlemanly capitalists who influenced the British colonial policy.⁷² A discussion of the Swazi-British relations must take into account the existence of the British capital in Swaziland. This is precisely because the British government made it a matter of principle to protect British financial interests in Swaziland both in its dealings with the Transvaal government and the Swazi monarchy

⁷⁰Letter, from F.B. Doering, manager of the Forbes' Reef Gold Mining Company, Limited, to Colonel Sir Francis de Winton, Her Majesty's Special Commissioner in Swaziland, December 31st, 1889, p. 74; Statement of Walter Carter with Allister Miller as witness to De Winton, Embekelweni, December 3rd, 1889, p. 79, and Statement of William Scott, manager, and Hugh T. McCubbin, inspecting manager, Havelock Gold Mining and Exploration Company, Limited, to De Winton, December 13th, 1889, respectively. All these documents are in De Winton, "Report on Swaziland," Command. 6201.

⁷¹See Lord Hailey, Native Administration in the British African Territories, Part V. The High Commission Territories: Basutoland, The Bechuanaland Protectorate and Swaziland (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1953), p. 364, and Alan R. Booth, Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983), p. 15.

⁷²For a discussion of the role of gentleman capitalists in the expansion of the British empire, see a two volume work by P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion 1688-1914 (London: Longman, 1993), and British Imperialism: Crisis and Deconstruction 1914-1990 (London: Longman, 1993).

over the affairs of Swaziland.

These British interests ought also to be understood as forming the basis of the British government's willingness to protect Swaziland from annexation by the Transvaal Boer Republic. We must emphasize this point, for in the historiography of Swaziland, it is often taken for granted that the British came to Swaziland to protect the emaSwati.⁷³ In crude political terms, the existence of financial investments of British subjects in Swaziland led to the development of the use of that dubious diplomatic phrase "national interests." And it is significant that these British investors appealed to the Colonial Office to protect their interests in Swaziland long before the country became a British colony in 1902. For example, on February 19, 1890, the Law firm of Venning, Sons, and Mannings sent a petition on behalf of their clients, the Swaziland Gold Exploration, and Land Company, Limited, "praying that Her Majesty's Government [would] protect the rights and interests of the Company, and its shareholders; and [would] not consent to the cession of the Swazieland [sic] territory to the South African Republic, or to any other Power or State than the British Empire."⁷⁴ The Colonial Office gave a common response

⁷³See, for instance, Hailey, Administration, p. 362. An exception here is Jonathan Crush who observes in his study of the British colonial division of space in early twentieth-century Swaziland that, "underlying a guise of claimed protectionism of the Swazi lay fundamental commitments to the restructuring of the indigenous mode of production, to confirming white settlers and British capital in majority control over land and resources, and to promoting the provision of labor power for capitalist enterprise through taxation and the sanctioning of tenancy relations." Jonathan Crush, "The Colonial Division of Space: The Significance of the Swaziland Land Partition," International Journal of African Historical Studies, 13, 1 (1980), 72.

⁷⁴Letter, Messrs. Venning, Sons, and Mannings, London, to Lord Knutsford, Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Colonial Office, February 19, 1890, No. 174, Further

to these companies that as a principle, it would make sure that the interests of British subjects in Swaziland would be protected in any action taken by the British government.⁷⁵

The presence of such British investments in the country, surely converted Swaziland into a sphere of British colonial economy, although the country was not yet declared as a colony of any European power.⁷⁶ Here then, we have a situation which resembles the establishment of the British imperial authority in the kingdoms of southern Uganda in the 1890s. One scholar of Ugandan history has observed that the British had established their control over some of these kingdoms before 1896, the year during which a British Protectorate of Uganda was officially declared.⁷⁷

The Anglo-Transvaal commitment to safeguard the independence of Swaziland

Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Swaziland and Tongaland, in Command Paper No. 6200 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1890), p. 248. For similar sentiments see letters by the following: Acton's Swaziland, London, to Colonial Office, February 3, 1890, No. 168, p. 243; Bird's Swaziland Concession, London, to Colonial Office, February 3, 1890, No. 169, pp. 243-44; The Havelock Gold Mining and Exploration Company, Liverpool, to Colonial Office, February 7, 1890, No. 170, pp. 244-46; F.H. Faviell, London, to Colonial Office, February 19, 1890, No. 173, p. 247. All in *ibid.*

⁷⁵See, for example, Colonial Office to Messrs. Venning, Sons, and Mannings, February 22, 1890, No. 175, p. 249, in *ibid.* See also, Colonial Office to the Havelock Gold Mining and Exploration Company, February 18, 1890, No. 172, p. 247, in *ibid.*

⁷⁶For a discussion of the notion of colonial economy elsewhere in Africa, see W. Rodney, "The colonial economy," in A. Adu Boahen, ed. General History of Africa. VII: Africa under Colonial Domination, 1880-1935 (UNESCO: Heinemann, 1985), pp. 332-350; C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, "The colonial economy of the former French, Belgian and Portuguese zones, 1914-35," in *ibid.*, pp. 351-381, and M.H.Y. Kaniki, "The colonial economy: the former British zones," in *ibid.*, pp. 382-419. For a discussion of Africa's connection to the world economy and for some synthesis of various debates and theories on the expansion of capitalist economy to Africa, see Frederick Cooper, "African and the World Economy," African Studies Review, XXIV, 2/3 (June/September 1981), 1-86.

against colonialism by either Britain or the Transvaal marked the first step toward an evolution of Swazi-British relations at the interstate level. However, since by this time Britain was emerging as an imperial power in southern African region, such interstate relations were asymmetrical: with the British making it difficult for the emaSwati to govern or the Transvaal Boers to administer Swaziland, from December 1894 to October 1899, without a recourse to them. The fact that the Swazi-British relations emerged in the context of European military conquest of African states not only afforded the emaSwati an opportunity to observe the British imperial military power in action, but it also impressed upon them an acknowledgment that such an imperial power could be used against them as well, should they fail to cooperate with the British or be on the opposite side of the British. At least, this is what usually happens in situations where power relations are forged in terror-ridden contexts.⁷⁸ Of course, an element of terror or the actual use of it in military conflicts was the hallmark of British expansion in southern Africa.⁷⁹ Some of the British officials were aware of how nations behave when faced with

⁷⁷Low, "Lion Rampant," Political Studies, p. 248.

⁷⁸For an illustration of this point elsewhere, see Scott, Domination, p. xi.

⁷⁹For the British use of terror in the eastern Cape, see Ben Macleannan, A Proper Degree of Terror: John Graham and the Cape's Eastern Frontier (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986), and Mostert, Frontiers. For the Natal region, see Jeff Guy, The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom: The Civil War in Zululand, 1879-1884 (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1994, first published 1979) and Laband, Kingdom. For the role of the military in the expansion of British Empire, see A.J. Christopher, The British Empire at its Zenith (London: Croom Helm, 1988), chapter 4, and Low, "Lion Rampant" Political Studies, pp. See also Low's book in which this article was reworked into, Lion Rampant: Essays in the Study of British Imperialism (London: Frank Cass, 1973).

a situation of insecurity. For instance, when vouching for the emaSwati's alleged wavering between the British and the Transvaal forces during the South African War, Geoffrey Lagden argued that since the emaSwati were left on their own by both the British and the Transvaal governments, "the law of self protection dictated that they should manifest outward friendship to those who from time to time could inflict upon them punishment or persecution, if they displayed loyalty towards either belligerent."⁸⁰

Another major feature which brought Swaziland to the attention of the British policy makers in the Colonial Office and the British industrialists was the discovery of gold in 1882.⁸¹ This brought an influx of British and Transvaal mining speculators and prospectors into Swaziland, an influx which culminated in the scramble for concessions. Transvaal Boer farmers flocked to Swaziland for stock grazing. The scramble for Swaziland extended the Anglo-Boer rivalry from the Transvaal to Swaziland. The Anglo-Transvaal commitment to preserve the independence of Swaziland became a symbolic gesture as the British and the Transvaalers intensified their competition in getting concessions in the country.⁸²

These developments prompted Sir Hercules Robinson, High Commissioner for

⁸⁰Confidential amended draft report on Swaziland 1902 by Geoffrey Lagden, Commissioner for Native Affairs, Transvaal, attached to Special Commissioner for Swaziland's report on the condition of Swaziland, Mbabane, 3rd March 1903, J64/03, SNA.

⁸¹Europeans had been prospecting for minerals in Swaziland as recently as 1868. See Bulpin, Trails, p. 322.

⁸²Crush, Struggle, p. 34, and Booth, Swaziland, pp. 12-13.

South Africa, to write to Edward Stanhope, British M.P., regarding a policy Britain should follow in its relations with Swaziland.⁸³ As elsewhere in Africa, British imperial policy was strongly influenced by economic considerations, a point which has been ignored in Swazi-Boer relations. With the gold finds in the Transvaal (1886) as a precedent, the British were lured by gold prospects in Swaziland. Robinson told Stanhope that in the geologists' view Swaziland "contains the richest goldfields in South Africa."⁸⁴ This view of Swaziland as falling within a gold belt in the interior of southern Africa was independently confirmed by another observer, who drew up a sketch of a map showing the location of Swaziland within the gold belt.⁸⁵ Others like Edward P. Mathers even wrote newspaper articles to publicize Swaziland's gold finds in the British colony of Natal and in England.⁸⁶ Robinson, for his part, sketched out a scenario in which events

⁸³Letter, Hercules Robinson, Cape Town, to Edward Stanhope, M.P., October 12, 1886, Public Record Office, Colonial Office (C.O.), African, No. 330, CO 87/25, Printed for the use of the Colonial Office. Robinson was the Governor of the Cape Colony and the British High Commissioner for South Africa from January 1881 to April 1889. (I am very grateful to Professor Alan R. Booth for sharing this document with me.)

⁸⁴Hercules Robinson's Memorandum on Swaziland, Cape Town, 9th October 1886, attached to his letter to Stanhope, October 12, 1886, in African, No. 330, CO 87/25. See also map on figure 1 with a triangular ABC for gold discoveries in appendix C.

⁸⁵See map on figure 2 in appendix C by William Jesser Coope. Coope was a British imperialist. For example, he prefaced his booklet to which he attached this map, with these words, "I must make, as my excuse for this, the impression amongst us South Africans that, if more were known of Southern Africa, people at home [England] would take a more practical interest in the grand Empire which awaits the Anglo-Saxon race in the land of diamonds and gold, and that the result would be beneficial alike to Colonists and the British Empire." See Coope, *Swaziland*, p. 3.

⁸⁶According to Huw M. Jones, Edward Peter Mathers' articles which first appeared in the *Natal Mercury*, a newspaper, were later (July 1884) published under the title, *A Glimpse*

would develop in Swaziland. He pointed out that the Swazi King Mbandzeni would be overwhelmed by European gold fortune seekers. And should this happen, he believed, Mbandzeni would request British protection on the basis of the emaSwati's previous military assistance when the British fought against the BaPedi in 1879. He also foresaw the intensification of the encroachments upon Swaziland by the Transvaal Boer farmers who either drove their cattle to Swaziland for winter grazing, rented or bought farms from Swazi chiefs.⁸⁷ He further speculated that the Boers would, "no doubt, *unless restrained*, eventually effect, *upon one pretext or another*, a settlement in the country, in the same way as they have done in Bechuanaland and Zululand."⁸⁸ Although Robinson pointed out that the Transvaal government had promised to investigate the alleged Boer encroachments into Swaziland, he doubted that the Transvaal would terminate such encroachment.⁸⁹

of the Gold Fields. Being Notes of a Trip to Moodies. Mathers revisited Swaziland again in 1887 for further investigation of the news of the gold finds. This time he is reported to have interviewed King Mbandzeni. He recorded his views of the situation in The Gold Fields Revisited being Further Glimpses of the Gold Fields of South Africa (published in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, 1887). Mathers was a founder and editor of the *Natal Advertiser*. His trips to the Transvaal Gold Fields and Swaziland were commissioned by the *Natal Mercury*. For all this information, see Huw M. Jones, A Biographical Register of Swaziland to 1902 (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1993), p. 392. Gold finds in Swaziland were also advertised in *The Argus Annual and South African Directory* (London: The Argus Printing and Publishing, 1893. A copy of this is located at the South African Library, Cape Town), p. 66-67. *The Argus* was sold in Bookstores in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Kimberley, Pretoria and Salisbury.

⁸⁷Robinson's Memorandum

⁸⁸*Ibid.* Emphasis added.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*

Therefore, in Robinson's view, the main issue for British policy makers was whether the British government was obliged to honor both on paper and in practice its promise "to maintain the independence of the Swazis and the integrity of their country," as stipulated in clause twelve of the London Convention of 1884. His stance was that there was no such an obligation. He based his opinions on the following grounds: first, the geographical location of Swaziland, that is, its being surrounded by the Transvaal on its north-west-south borders and by the Portuguese territory on the east. Therefore, the British could only access Swaziland through the Transvaal or Portuguese territories. Second, according to Article Two of the London Convention, Britain could declare Swaziland its protectorate and thereafter administer it through a deputy commissioner under the High Commissioner.⁹⁰ But Robinson discouraged this option, for experience in dealing with protectorates militated against it, as he put it: "experience has, however, shown that under a mere Protectorate it is very difficult to establish efficient administration and jurisdiction over Europeans, especially over foreigners. Annexation is necessary for such a purpose."⁹¹ Third, a protectorate in Swaziland would evolve along similar lines as in Bechuanaland, where it had culminated in annexation. And Robinson did not view such a development appropriate for Swaziland, because of its inaccessibility to the British except through either the Portuguese or the Transvaal territories. Should annexation happen, this would mean that the British would "be in a position of a man

⁹⁰*Ibid.*

⁹¹*Ibid.*

burdened with a property to which he had no right of way."⁹² Fourth, he discouraged the idea of annexation because the Transvaal government could interpret it as a breach of Article XII of the London Convention.⁹³

Having expressed the above views, Robinson concluded that the non-interference of the British government in the affairs of Swaziland would lead to one of the two outcomes: either gold miners and Boer farmers would establish an independent republic, or the country would be annexed to the Transvaal. The first possibility would not entail a violation of the London Convention, whereas the second one could be done only with the British consent ensuring that "reasonable rights of the Swazis should be secured to them."⁹⁴

Robinson's views were influenced by the events elsewhere, where the British had to deal with either the miners or the Boers. For example, he stipulated that:

[I]f Her Majesty's Government think that they may be forced eventually by popular clamour into active intervention in Swaziland, then we had better profit by the lessons taught us in Bechuanaland and Zululand, and intervene at once by the appointment of a Commissioner and the establishment of a Protectorate before any considerable proportion of Swaziland has been occupied by either Boers or

⁹²*Ibid.* See also Sir Hercules Robinson to Sir H.T. Holland, February 19, 1887, in James Wycliffe Headlam, ed., Materials for the History of South Africa, 1890-1895: Being Selections from the Private and Official Correspondence of Lord Loch, Vol. II (London: Spottiswoode, 1898), p.10.

⁹³Robinson's Memorandum on Swaziland, CO 87/25

⁹⁴*Ibid.* For a discussion of a concern to preserve the rights of the emaSwati, see minutes of a meeting between the High Commissioner for South Africa and the Transvaal Authorities, in CO 879/38. (I am indebted to Professor Alan R. Booth for sharing this document with me.)

miners.⁹⁵

Here, Robinson revealed his concern to avoid a repeat of British confrontations with the Boers. He was mainly preoccupied with bringing about political changes in the Transvaal, where the gold miners were still contesting a right to vote. Therefore, he wanted British involvement in the affairs of Swaziland to contribute toward a solution in the Transvaal. Thus, he finally advised the Colonial Office not to be involved in the affairs of Swaziland, and that the British should only provide diplomatic assistance to the emaSwati at appropriate times.⁹⁶ The least, he was prepared to do at this point (1884) was to recommend an establishment of a British agency on the Swaziland-Transvaal border to help Mbandzeni to deal with concessionaires. Thus he sent Rutherford to establish whether King Mbandzeni was receptive to such an idea and if so, whether he would be willing to pay such an agent.

But of even more significance to our topic, is that Robinson suggested to Mbandzeni what he did not recommend to the Colonial Office. He told him, if European fortune-seekers, whom Robinson referred to as a "gang of marauders," enter Swaziland without Mbandzeni's permission, the latter should mobilize his army and chase them out of his country.⁹⁷ By this suggestion Robinson was ingeniously setting-up Mbandzeni

⁹⁵Robinson's Memorandum on Swaziland, CO 87/25.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*

⁹⁷Quoted in Hugh Macmillan, "From Mswati II to Sobhuza II: The Swazi Nation from 1865-1899" (unpublished paper, n.d., Special Collection, University of Swaziland), p.12, and in Matsebula, History, pp. 106-107.

against Europeans. And should he pursued this suggestion, it could be argued, he would had provided the British and Transvaal governments, whose subjects were mainly the ones who flocked to Swaziland, with an excuse to employ a military approach to interfere in the affairs of Swaziland. Such a suggestion had a potential to enable the two countries to abrogate their guarantees in the Pretoria and London Conventions of 1881 and 1884, which committed them to the maintenance of the independence of Swaziland, for Mbandzeni would have been branded an enemy.

When Robinson made such a suggestion, he ignored the history of the Swazi leaders' dealings with Europeans. Swazi kings had a history of aligning themselves with Europeans against other contenders of power within the ruling aristocracy. For instance, there are claims that when the core Swazi group, i.e., the Dlamini and others, was still establishing itself in what later came known as Swaziland having come from the east coast, were raided by the early inhabitants of the county. They then sought protection from the "emigrant Boers" and the British Government of the Natal Colony. By 1846 they formed an offensive alliance with the Dutch. This treaty alliance was confirmed in 1855, and it prohibited the emaSwati from entering into any war without the prior approval of the Boers, as the Dutch were now calling themselves. The Boer Government pledged itself to protect the emaSwati against the amaZulu. In exchange for all this, the emaSwati gave to the Transvaal government a part of land which became part of the Lydenburg district on the eastern Transvaal. And it is further claimed that when, in the early period of Swazi state formation, the first Swazi King from the Dlamini clan Sobhuza I was attacked by one of his vassals, Moya, he enlisted the services of the Portuguese from

Lourenco Marques (present-day Maputo) to suppress him. He rewarded them with cattle for their gun-power and for helping him to reestablish himself as king of Swaziland.

When Sobhuza I died in 1861 the Swazi ruling house entered into succession disputes during which nine of his brothers competed for the throne. It is claimed that it was only after the interference of the Boers that the 1839 succession disputes ended and by so doing ensured the succession of King Mswati II, after whom the country got its name, to the Swazi throne. Similarly, the Transvaal government had sent about 400 armed Boers to the crowning ceremony of Mbandzeni as king of Swaziland in 1875.⁹⁸ In July 1875 on the day of his inauguration as King of Swaziland, immediately after the ceremony Mbandzeni asked G.M. Rudolph, the then Swazi Border Commissioner for the Transvaal Boer government, to get him a "reliable whiteman," whom he wanted to settle on the South-West border of Swaziland near the Mahamba range. The man was to check on Mbandzeni's half-brother Mbilini who was a fugitive with his followers in Zululand and known to be engaged in raiding activities in Swaziland. Rudolph got Ignautius Maritz, who in turn brought along his brothers-in-law the three Ferreiras. They brought gifts for King Mbandzeni and were settled in what later became known as the Little Free State.⁹⁹

⁹⁸See Bulpin, Storm, p. 123; Dudely Barker, Swaziland (London: HMSO, 1965), p.19, and Headlam, ed., Materials, p. 2, for Sobhuza and Mswati, respectively. For Mbandzeni, see G.M. Rudolph, Resident Magistrate, Eshowe, Natal, to Gerald Brown, Secretary for Zululand, March 16, 1889, Enclosure in No. 81, in Command Paper No. 6200, p. 134; Manfred Nathan, South Africa From Within (London: John Murray, 1926), p. 54. For a fuller discussion of some of these events, see Bonner, Kings, chapters 4-6, and Philip Bonner, "Mswati II, c. 1826-65," in Christopher Saunders, ed., Black Leaders in Southern African History (London: Heinemann, 1979), pp. 61-74.

⁹⁹Rudolph to Brown, March 16, 1889, No. 81, in Command Paper No. 6200, p. 134.

Mbilini and his followers' raiding activities on Swaziland were thus ended with the help of these Europeans. However, we might add here that the Transvaal government had its own scores to settle with Mbilini, for after he had settled at Phongolo in northern part of the King Cetshwayo's Zulu Kingdom in 1867 he organized his followers into a guerrilla, which he used to attack both the emaSwati on south-western Swaziland and the Boers at Wakkerstroom District.¹⁰⁰

In 1868 the Transvaal government even went to an extent of annexing to the Transvaal the whole of Swaziland. When doing so, the Transvaal claimed to have extended its eastern boundary to include Delagoa Bay. It was at this point that the Portugal challenged the Transvaal claim on Delagoa Bay, for the Portuguese in Mozambique had long considered the Bay to be theirs. Consequently, in 1869 without the knowledge of the Swazi leaders and the British, the Transvaal and Portugal governments entered into a secret treaty and delineated Lebombo mountain range as the boundary between the two countries. By this act, Delagoa Bay remained a Portuguese possession. The British government only became aware of this treaty and the Boer designs in Swaziland in 1871 and protested against it, for it threatened their interests on the southern shores of Delagoa Bay and on the Island of Inyacke. This matter was finally settled in favor of the Portuguese through the arbitration presided over by the French

¹⁰⁰For a fuller discussion of Mbilini's raids against the emaSwati and the Boers, and his relationship with King Cetshwayo of Zululand, see J.P.C. Laband, "Mbilini, Manyonyoba and the Phongolo River Frontier: A neglected sector of the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879," in John Laband and Paul Thompson, Kingdom and Colony at War: Sixteen Studies on the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1990), pp.183-216.

President in 1875 (the details of this arbitration do not concern us here).¹⁰¹ However, some of the Transvaal Boer claims relating to their annexation of Swaziland and therefore being the masters of the country had practical limitations on the ground. Other scholars of Swazi history had observed that the Transvaal government lacked means to enforce its decisions on the emaSwati. Therefore, the Swazi-Boer relations "had hinged on a balance of weakness rather than a balance of strength. Neither side enjoyed a decisive offensive advantage, but each prone to periodic collapse."¹⁰² However, even in such an indecisive situation, the Swazi had closer dealings with Europeans than with any African power in the region.

Thus, when suggesting that King Mbandzeni should expel the Europeans from Swaziland, Robinson had either misunderstood or ignored an important irony in Swazi politics: although Swazi kings had a dread of domination by Europeans, especially by the Boers, they in fact partially owed their rise to positions of kingship against their power-contenders to European influence at least, since the advent of the latter on the south-eastern Africa. Thus, this explains the existence of close ties between the Swazi kings and the Europeans, and yet the kings did not encourage such Europeans to develop closer ties with the general population of the emaSwati, part of which was not of the Dlamini

¹⁰¹Headlam, Materials, pp. 2-3.

¹⁰²Bonner, Kings, p. 221. For a fuller discussion of Swazi-Boer relations, see ibid., chapter 5; and for the emaSwati and their neighbors in general, see Philip Bonner, "Factions and Fissions: Transvaal/Swazi Politics in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," Journal of African History, XIX, 2 (1978), 219-238; Philip Bonner, "Swazi Relations with their Neighbours, 1840-81" (Paper for discussion on 6th November 1968 in African History Seminar, University of London), pp. 1-9.

and other closely related clans which formed what one Swazi scholar has termed a "conquering aristocracy."¹⁰³ The Swazi aristocracy's relations with Europeans had by this time evolved into what one scholar elsewhere has termed "ambiguities of dependence."¹⁰⁴ Therefore, Mbandzeni ignored Robinson's suggestion to expel by force the concessionaires from Swaziland.

Mbandzeni and his councilors, for their part, did not disclose to R. Rutherford¹⁰⁵ the hidden transcript that was developing between them and the Shepstone family in Natal, which was to have Sir Theophilus Shepstone's son Arthur be appointed as an Agent and Advisor to Mbandzeni in his dealings with the concessionaires. In addition the king was to decline any offer from Rutherford who was on his way to see him. Although the involvement of the Shepstone family in the affairs of Swaziland came as competitor to the emerging Swazi-British relations rather than as a representation of British government, in the long term its involvement had the effect of eroding the Swazi rulers' hold on their economic life in the shape of concessions. The Swazi leaders also based their perception of Theophilus Shepstone on what they believed he did for them when he

¹⁰³See Kuper, Aristocracy.

¹⁰⁴This situation was first noticed by scholars in twentieth-century colonial Natal. See Shula Marks, The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986). See also Shula Marks, "The Ambiguities of Dependence: John L. Dube of Natal," Journal of Southern African Studies, 1, 2 (April 1975), 162-180.

¹⁰⁵Rutherford was secretary of the British resident in the Transvaal based in Pretoria. In February-March 1884 he was sent by the British resident on a fact finding mission to Swaziland.

was employed by the British Natal Colony government as its agent in 'native' affairs.

When Rutherford arrived at the Swazi headquarters the Swazi leaders declined the idea of dealing with a stranger. Besides, they were not convinced that a British agent would be useful in discouraging Boer encroachment in Swaziland, because he had failed to do so in Zululand. Therefore, they preferred a person of their own choice, who would be accountable to them to protect their interests, instead of those of the British.¹⁰⁶ The British officials interpreted the Swazi response as a slap in the face which Mbandzeni would later regret. For instance, Under-Secretary Herbert asserted, "since Mbandzeni did not think British Residents did much good to 'the natives' elsewhere, 'he will no doubt soon be under a Republic'."¹⁰⁷ Other British officials observed that Mbandzeni's refusal was a major twist in the history of Swaziland.¹⁰⁸ In fact, Herbert might as well have stated that the British would make it difficult for the emaSwati to deal with the Republican Boers or the European concessionaires without recourse to them. This is what happened when Alfred Milner succeeded Robinson's successor Sir Henry Brough Loch, as a High Commissioner for South Africa in January 1897.

Robinson's memorandum represents a hidden transcript and an influence of "the man on the spot" regarding emerging Swazi-British relations, for it was intended for use of the Colonial Office only. Its main effect was to delay the establishment of British

¹⁰⁶Bonner, *Kings*, pp. 170-171.

¹⁰⁷Partially quoted in *ibid.*, p. 171.

¹⁰⁸Confidential, Amended draft Report on Swaziland, 1902, by Geoffrey Lagden, Commissioner for Native Affairs, Transvaal, 3rd March 1903, J64/03, SNA.

colonization of Swaziland as well as undermining the Anglo-Transvaal commitment to protect the independence and integrity of Swaziland. In Robinson, therefore, we have an example of the role and influence of "the man on the spot" during the British imperial expansion. The role and influence of "the man on the spot" has long been noticed by scholars of British imperial history, though this observation is still yet to be taken seriously in the historiography of Swaziland.¹⁰⁹ By 1887 he urged the Colonial Office to choose a position between non-interference in Swaziland's affairs and annexation.¹¹⁰ Thus, this suggestion might have contributed to the Colonial Office's sending of a special commission to Swaziland at the end of 1889 (see below).

As anticipated by Robinson, European concessionaires flocked to Swaziland where they pestered Mbandzeni "day and night" for concessions. Unlike their earlier infrequent rural oriented Boer predecessors from the Transvaal, this latest influx of predominantly British concessionaires brought with them their cultural baggage to Swaziland. They neither bartered for concessions, nor allowed themselves to be settled by the Swazi monarchy at strategical border points as buffer against the neighboring states who were continuously attacking the emerging Dlamini hegemony in Swaziland, in exchange for concessions.¹¹¹ Instead, the new arrivals introduced cash economy/ money

¹⁰⁹For a discussion of the notion of "the man on the spot" elsewhere in Africa, see Martin Lynn, "Consul and Kings: British Policy, 'the Man on the Spot', and the Seizure of Lagos, 1851," Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, X, 2 (January 1982), 50-167.

¹¹⁰Headlam, ed., Materials, p.10.

¹¹¹For this type of concessionaires, see Bonner, Kings, chapter 9, and Bulpin, Trails, pp. 321-322. For a reference to "day and night," see Bulpin, Trails, p. 334. A first concession

as payments for concessions. Even more, they demanded from Mbandzeni unknown phenomena as proofs of their payments for concessions: phenomena such as receipts, accounts and written records. Thus, by so doing, they presented the Swazi King with a situation he could not handle by relying on the services of his people, for none of them had received a western education by then. Thus, he turned to one of the concessionaires, John Thorburn, whom he somewhat regarded as his honorary adviser when dealing with the concessionaires.¹¹² In an apparent move to deal with the concessionaires through a European person who was not attached to them, and perhaps whom he thought would be trustworthy, Mbandzeni looked elsewhere for such a person. And he found one in Natal.

Mbandzeni asked Sir Theophilus Shepstone, a retired British Agent-General of Natal (1845-1879), to send him one of his sons to be his adviser in dealing with concessionaires. In a typical way of Swazi leaders's conduct of diplomatic relations, Mbandzeni attached to his request a Swazi princess, Tifokati Dlamini, to be given to Shepstone, Senior, as his bride.¹¹³ By offering a Swazi princess as a bride to Shepstone the Swazi king had apparently aimed at cementing a relationship with the Shepstone family through a marriage alliance, a phenomenon which was common among the Swazi aristocracy and worked as a golden thread which tied the aristocracy together, as well as between the Swazi kings and their powerful neighbors such as the Ndwandwe and Zwide

in Swaziland is generally known to have been granted by King Mswati to a group of Transvaal Boers from Ohrigstad, for one hundred head of cattle, on July 25, 1846.

¹¹²Bulpin, Trails, pp. 334-335.

¹¹³Jones, Register, p. 422. See also Barker, Swaziland, p.19.

in the south. Here it should be recalled that Swazi kings had, during the days of Swazi state formation, married wives from the leaders of what later emerged as the Zulu state. Part of the objects for such marriages was to forge relations with their hostile southern neighbors and by so doing to turn them into friendly neighbors.¹¹⁴ For our purpose, the significance of Mbandzeni's offer of a Swazi princess to Shepstone, who declined the offer, is that it shows that women were the essential ingredients in the development of Swazi politics. To put this differently, women were the building blocks of Swazi politics.

Prior to this request, the Swazi monarchy had perceived its survival from attacks by its southern neighbor, the Zulu state, as attributable to its connection with the British Natal colony through Sir Theophilus Shepstone's influence by reigning in the amaZulu. Other scholars have observed that Shepstone's "image as a father-figure to both the Africans and Europeans of Natal and the surrounding area encouraged the Swazi place faith implicitly in his son" who they wanted to be their "Resident Adviser and Agent."¹²⁰ Thus Shepstone perceived and promoted himself as a father figure over the emaSwati.¹¹⁶ He asserted, the emaSwati "looked upon their country and themselves as belonging to

¹¹⁴For the Swazi kings' marriages with wives from powerful chiefdoms of the Ndwandwe and Zwide, see Bonner, *Kings*, pp. 11 and 26.

¹¹⁵B.H.L. Nyeko, "The Influence of Foreign Advisers and Educated Africans Upon the Swazi Rulers in the Early Colonial Period" (Unpublished paper, History Department, Makerere, n.d. A copy of this paper is available at the University of Swaziland, Library, Special Collection.), p. 3.

¹¹⁶B.H.L. Nyeko, "The Influence of Foreign Advisers and Educated Africans Upon the Swazi Rulers in the Early Colonial Period" (Unpublished paper, History Department, Makerere, n.d. A copy of this paper is available at the University of Swaziland, Library, Special Collection.), p. 3.

me; that I was their father, and, must of necessity spare one of my sons to go and live with them, and take care of the rest of my children."¹¹⁷ Besides the obvious self-promotion, Shepstone like a classical colonialist, revealed a paternalistic attitude toward the emaSwati by casting himself into a role of father-like figure over them. He sent his son, Arthur Shepstone, to Mbandzeni. But, Arthur did not work for long, because Mbandzeni soon saw in him a potential rival regarding his authority in his country.¹²³ Then, on December 10, 1886, Shepstone sent his other son Theophilus Shepstone Jr., better known to the emaSwati as *Mhlakuvane* and to Europeans as "Offy," to work as the Resident Adviser and Agent of King Mbandzeni in his dealings with European concessionaires.¹²⁴

However, this time, Shepstone spelt out clearly the conditions under which his son should be allowed to work, and at the same time he made himself the final authority to whom his son and King Mbandzeni were to have recourse, should there be any misunderstanding between them. He stipulated the following conditions as his consent to

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 148.

¹¹⁸Confidential, Amended draft Report on Swaziland, 1902, by Geoffrey Lagden, Commissioner for Native Affairs, Transvaal, 3rd March 1903, J64/03, SNA.

¹¹⁹This work does not focus on Shepstone's (Jr.) involvement in Swaziland. For a work which deals specifically with Shepstone in Swaziland, see Robin William Fortuyn Drogleever, "The Role of Off Shepstone in Swaziland, 1886-1895" (MA thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1976.) A copy of this thesis is available at the National Archives in Swaziland. See also Matsebula, *History*, chapter eight; Bonner, *Kings*, chapter 10; Huw M. Jones, *A Biographical Register of Swaziland to 1902* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1993), pp. 520-539; Nyeko, "Foreign Advisers," pp.1-5, and Garson, "Swaziland Question," pp. 351-353.

his son's appointment:

In the presence of several Natal Natives, I [Shepstone] stipulated that my son should not, unless specially requested, interfere in any way with the Government of the Swazi people, that his duty should be the arrangement of the Chief's relations with the white people, especially in regard to prospecting for and mining minerals; that, as the Chief could not write, Mr. Shepstone should do this for him, and be responsible for all written communications or documents signed by the Chief; that no paper should be signed by him until the purport and effect of it had been fully explained by Mr. Shepstone to the Chief, and that unless this was rigidly adhered to, there would be no use in his going at all. I told them that these duties would frequently expose Mr. Shepstone to the resentment of disappointed white men, who endeavour to destroy confidence between him and the Chief. I warned the messengers especially of this, and added, as a concluding stipulation, *that if any difference should arise between them which they could not settle by mutual explanation, it should be referred to me for adjustment, if possible, before any final step should be taken by either party.*¹²⁵

Shepstone's conditions for allowing his son to serve as an Agent and Advisor to King Mbandzeni reveal an agenda set for a hidden contest of power between his son and the Swazi king as well as between Shepstone Jr. and concessionaires. However, what was even more important was that Shepstone reserved to himself a final authority in resolving such a power contest, in the event it erupts. Surely, by so doing, he was in an ingenious fashion subordinating the authority of the Swazi king to himself. He also foresaw that his son would play a most critical function as a custodian of Swazi wealth and as an interpreter of the economic transactions of the most valuable Swazi state assets: mineral, commercial trading and land grazing rights. In fact, Shepstone, Jr. was brought in as a broker between the Swazi monarchy and the European concessionaires when the latter were introducing a western-style form of life into Swaziland. In retrospect,

¹²⁰Memorandum by Sir T. Shepstone to Sir Arthur Havelock, April 20, 1889, in Command Paper No. 6200, p.148. Emphasis added

Shepstone was correct in all accounts, for Offy did indeed become embroiled in intrigues with the concessionaires. He even ended up having contenders among them for his position, to an extent that Mbandzeni replaced him with Allister Miller, as his adviser in February 1889.¹²⁶

In Mbandzeni's view Shepstone was employed to work as Minister of Foreign affairs for the kingdom's dealings with European concessionaires. Because concessions entailed economic transactions, Shepstone could also be taken as holding a position of Minister of Economic Affairs as pertaining to transactions with Europeans. His appointment was strictly restricted to dealings with matters affecting Europeans only, and should not interfere in any matters which involved the Swazi leaders and their subjects. At this point little did Mbandzeni know that "Offy" would turn out to be a trojan horse by granting away the highest number of concessions to Europeans in the history of Swaziland within a two year period of his coming to the country, 1887-1889.¹²⁷ He even later alleged to have had secret dealings with the Transvaal government which paid him for such services.¹²⁸

The Swazi-British relations entered another level when the British and Transvaal governments appointed a Joint Commission under a dual leadership of Sir Francis De

¹²¹For intrigues with concessionaires, see Bulpin, Storm, pp. 143 and 151.

¹²⁷See appendix in this work.

¹²⁸For a discussion of this, see Noel George Garson, "The Swaziland Question and A Road to the Sea, 1887-1895" (M.A. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand), in Archives Year Book for South African History, Vol. II (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1957), chapter II. See also, Nyeko, "Foreign Advisers," p. 4.

Winton and Commandant General Piet Joubert, respectively represented their governments, to enquire into the affairs of Swaziland in 1889. This commission, which in England was known as the De Winton Commission, was constituted by the following persons, on the British side: Sir Francis de Winton (from the Horse Guards in the War Office of the Colonial Office, and became the chairman of this joint commission in Swaziland), Lieutenant Colonel Richard Martin, who had just resigned a position in the defunct White Committee in Swaziland, and Advocate W.P. Schreiner (its legal adviser) and Captain R.S.S. Baden-Powell, and on Transvaal side: Commandant General Piet Joubert (the head of the Transvaal team), General Nicholas J. Smit, Dr. O. Krause (Transvaal State Attorney and legal adviser of the Transvaal commission) and I.N. van Alphen (Chief of the Postal Department, and secretary of the team).¹²⁹ The high profiles of the members of the Joint Commission show the importance attached by the British and

¹²⁹For the names of the British team, see letter, Sir F. De Winton, Horse Guards, War Office, to Lord Knutsford, the Secretary of State, Colonial Office, February 25th, 1890, No. 3, "Report on Swaziland" by Colonel Sir F. De Winton, in Command, 6201, p. 5. For the Transvaal names, see Enclosure in No. 3, "Report on Swaziland" by De Winton, in *ibid.*, p. 10. See also Bulpin, Storm, p.151, and Matsebula, History, p. 108. Baden-Powell later returned to Swaziland to study the structural organization of the Swazi military. And such a study provided him with insights which he employed in his formation of the Boy Scout movement. See Matsebula, History, p.108, footnote. Joubert, Smit and C. von Welligh, the Surveyor-General of the Transvaal, were owners of a syndicate which bought the railway concession from R.M. Campbell in Swaziland in the late 1880s and they later sold this concession at a profit to the Transvaal government. See Bulpin, Trails, p. 331. Perhaps the involvement of Joubert, Smit and von Welligh, who were government employees in the Transvaal, reinforces the claim that concessions like postal, telegraph, railway and the so-called revenue concessions, were in fact bought by the agents of the Transvaal government. For such a claim, see J.W.T. McCubbin, and 197 others, Memorial of Residents in Swaziland and Interest Holders, to Colonel Sir F. de Winton, in Annexures to Sir F. De Winton's Report, Command, 6201, p. 87. See also Bonner, Kings, pp. 190 and 213.

Transvaal governments to the events to be inquired into by it. In spite of the Anglo-Transvaal joint inquiry into the affairs of Swaziland, the British instructed De Winton that each team should write and submit its own report and recommendations separately to its government.¹³⁰ This directive made provision for the creation of hidden transcripts from each other by the Anglo-Transvaal governments in their handling of the affairs of Swaziland. The Transvaal government, for its part, wanted the Commission to present a unified front when executing its mission. With this in mind, the Transvaal President Paul Kruger, invited De Winton after he had landed in Cape Town to make a stop-over in Pretoria, the Transvaal capital, before proceeding to Swaziland. After consultation with Kruger and his government, the Joint Commission adopted as its operative guideline a position "which pledged neither Government to a definite course, but was sufficient to secure the independence of the Swazie under Article XII of the London Convention."¹³¹ While in Pretoria, the Joint Commission also agreed to a provision for establishing a temporary form of government for Europeans in Swaziland, whilst the two governments would be considering what steps to take on Swaziland, based on the Commission's recommendation.¹³² These diplomatic arrangements clearly form an aspect of an Anglo-Transvaal hidden transcript against the Swazi monarch.

The commission's mission was to inquire into the affairs of Swaziland and to

¹³⁰Letter, Robert G.H. Herbert, Colonial Office, to Sir F. De Winton, No.2, September 26th, 1889, in "Reprt on Swaziland" by De Winton, in Command, 6201, p. 5.

¹³¹"Report on Swaziland," by De Winton, Command, 6201, p. 10.

¹³²*Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

make recommendations to their respective governments regarding steps to be taken in dealing with petitions from the Swazi King and the British and Transvaal subjects with interests in Swaziland.¹³³ When appointing De Winton to head this commission, the Colonial Office drew his attention to four important points to be kept in mind when executing his mission. First, that the British government desired to have Transvaal assistance and co-operation in the affairs of Swaziland. Second, that at an earliest appropriate time upon his arrival in Swaziland, he should inform the Swazi King Mbandzeni of the commission's mission. Third, that his scope was unlimited in his interactions with the Commissioners of the Transvaal and in making recommendations to the government taking into consideration the wider context of South African interests.¹³⁴ Fourth, and the most important of all, was that whatever steps he would take, he should bear:

in mind that Her Majesty's Government desire[d] to arrive at a satisfactory and enduring understanding with the South African Republic in regard to all the tribes and countries bordering thereon, and that it [was] an essential feature of our policy that there should be *no undue restrictions upon the advancement or development of British trade and enterprise in any part of South Africa*.¹³⁵

This policy was the cornerstone of the Swazi-Anglo relations, and even with that

¹³³Letter, Lord Knutsford, Downing Street, to Colonel Sir Francis De Winton, No. 1, September 22nd, 1889, and Robert G.W. Herbert, Colonial Office, to Sir F. De Winton,

of the Anglo-Transvaal relations regarding the affairs of Swaziland. In essence, it meant the protection of economic interests of the British subjects in Swaziland. The Colonial Office was quite aware that Swaziland had already attracted the interests of British subjects in South Africa. For instance, when giving De Winton the terms of reference for his mission, Robert G.W. Herbert suggested to him to make a stop-over at Pietermaritzburg and consult with the Governor of the British Colony of Natal on the Natal residents' commercial and industrial interests in Swaziland.¹³⁶ Here we can only observe that traders from the British colony of Natal had trade contacts with Swaziland as far back as the 1860s.¹³⁷ The British were prepared to give up the political power of Swaziland over to the Transvaal government on condition that the latter was willing to protect the interests of British subjects in that country. Of course, this happened in December 1894, when the British and the Transvaal governments established a Transvaal 'protectorate' administration in Swaziland.

The appointment of the Anglo-Transvaal Joint Commission was prompted by developments both in Swaziland and in the Transvaal. The bickering of the British and the Transvaal Boer settlers and concessionaires in Swaziland led to the collapse of the "White Committee" which was instituted by Mbandzeni in 1887 in his attempt to rein in these Europeans. The "White Committee" was finally dissolved in 1889, when it proved itself unable to resolve complaints among the concessionaires.

¹³⁶Letter, Robert G.W. Herbert, Colonial Office, to Sir F. De Winton, No. 2, September 26th, 1889, in "Report on Swaziland" by De Winton, Command. 6201, p. 4.

¹³⁷Bulpin, Trails, p. 321.

The collapse of the "White Committee" meant that Europeans in Swaziland were left on their own, without any institutional authority to administer them, since Mbandzeni had granted the Committee a Charter of Rights on August 1, 1888, to make and administer laws pertaining to whites, such as levying taxes, among others. Thus, with the failure of the "White Committee", the Europeans concessionaires became a threat to the Swazi state, for its disintegration gave rise to a feeling of lawlessness since they were not subject to Swazi law. It must be remembered that among the concessionaires, were unsavory characters who came to Swaziland with criminal records from elsewhere or who were trigger-happy folks or just unruly by their nature. This group included persons such as Bob MacNab, better known to the emaSwati as *Ngogolo*, an ex-convict in Pietermaritzburg, Natal British colony, who came to Swaziland as a runaway, Charlie du Pont, an infamous trigger-happy figure, Quilp Constable, a former member of the Natal police, and Cussing Jack Baline, among others. With the "White Committee" becoming ineffective, personalities like these caused social disorder among the European community.¹³⁸ They are reported to have also "treated traditional authority with disdain. They came to be, in truth, a law unto themselves, moving boundary marker beacons, demanding tribute, seizing cattle, even children."¹³⁹ Thereupon, Mbandzeni appealed to the British and the Transvaal governments to send their representatives to Swaziland for

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 322-333, and Bulpin, *Storm*, pp. 142-147.

¹³⁹Booth, *Swaziland*, p. 14, see also Matsebula, *History*, p. 152. For a discussion of the establishment of the "White Committee" and its final demise, see Hailey, *Administration*, p. 364, and Genge, "Law," pp. 52-57.

the preservation of order¹⁴⁰ among Europeans.

However, Allister Miller, who had replaced Shepstone (Offy) as an adviser and agent of the Swazi King in February 1889, altered the content of Mbandzeni's original appeal to the Anglo-Transvaal governments. Upon assumption of his duties, Miller sent a petition, purported to be Mbandzeni's, to the British government appealing for a protectorate over Swaziland. Miller's petition rekindled rivalry between the British and the Transvaal nationals in Swaziland. These groups sent petitions, letters and telegrams with various kinds of imaginable pretenses to their respective governments persuading them to intervene in the political affairs of Swaziland.¹⁴¹ Some of the news was not only sensational and an exaggeration of what was going on in Swaziland, but was also of damaging nature to the reputation of King Mbandzeni. For instance, he was portrayed as a despot, cruel and "a blood-thirsty tyrant."¹⁴² To prove such a character the reports cited the killing off of Sandhlana, one of the most senior Swazi councillors, on Mbandzeni's instruction. Such news was probably taken too seriously by the Colonial Office which had apparently accepted it as an accurate portrayal of events in Swaziland. And after his first hand acquaintance with the affairs of Swaziland, De Winton deemed it necessary to set the record straight by pointing out that with regard to such reports, he found a consensus view among the people who were residents in Swaziland that Mbandzeni "was

¹⁴⁰Matsebula, History, p. 107.

¹⁴¹Bulpin, Storm, p.151, and Garson, "Swaziland Question," p. 347.

¹⁴²"Report on Swaziland," De Winton, Command, 6201, p. 8.

a man of singularly kind and gentle disposition."¹⁴³ After giving a summary of events pertaining to Sandhlana's death, De Winton concluded by saying, "I have mentioned this to show that Sandhlana was killed because he transgressed a fundamental law of the Swazie nation, the punishment of which was death, and *not because Umbandine was a blood-thirsty*."¹⁴⁴ De Winton also contradicted the depiction of Mbandzeni as a 'despot' in these words, "it is only due to the late King Umbandine [sic] to state that much of what has been written as regards his despotic acts, cruelty, &c, has not much foundation except in the *brains of sensational newsmongers*."¹⁴⁵

Miller's petition provided the Colonial Office with handles to interfere in the affairs of Swaziland. It did this by substituting the Swazi leaders' phrase, "preservation of order" among Europeans with the word "protection" of the whole country.¹⁴⁶ This was not an insignificant alteration of Mbandzeni's original understanding: that of his desire for the Anglo-Transvaal governments to introduce in Swaziland an institutional mechanism to rein in their otherwise unmannered subjects. By substituting the phrase "preservation of order" which was limited only to Europeans, with the word "protection" which it now

¹⁴³*Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 9. Emphasis added.

¹⁴⁵De Winton, "Report on Swaziland," p. 8. Emphasis added.

¹⁴⁶For the word, "protection", see letter from Robert G. W. Herbert, Colonial Office, to Sir F. De Winton, September 26th, 1889, No. 2., in "Report on Swaziland" by De Winton, in Command, 6201, p. 4. The establishment of protectorate status by European governments over African countries has largely happened in an ambiguous fashion. For a discussion of this elsewhere in Africa, see Sven Rubenson, "The Protectorate Paragraph of the Wichalē Treaty," Journal of African History, 2 (1964), 243-283.

extended to the whole country, the Colonial Office created a justification for it not only to meddle in the affairs of Swaziland, but also to place Swaziland on the list of countries in the process of being colonized by Britain.

However, the 1884 Convention of London had prohibited any unilateral intervention by either Britain or the Transvaal in the affairs of Swaziland without the consent of the other. To circumvent this restriction the Transvaal government proposed in May 1889 a trade off with the British for the former to be granted a free hand in the affairs of Swaziland. It proposed "to withdraw all its claims to the lands north of the Republic, and to use its influence to support British expansion in Bechuanaland and Matabeleland, if Her Majesty's Government [would] withdraw itself to the east of the Republic in Swaziland and Tongaland."¹⁴⁷ By so doing, the Transvaal proposal placed Swaziland in the context of the scramble for Africa, a theme that has received a

¹⁴⁷Quoted in a letter, from Herbert, Colonial Office, to De Winton, September 26th, 1889, No. 2, "Report on Swaziland" by De Winton, in Command 6201, p. 4. See also "The Swaziland Question," in *African (South)*, No. 438, Printed for the use of the Colonial Office, CO 879/37, p. 3. See also a letter from Sir Henry B. Loch, Governor and High Commissioner, to Lord Knutsford, Colonial Office, Cape Town, August 13, 1890, in *A Convention Between Her Majesty and the South African Republic for the Settlement of the Affairs of Swaziland, with Correspondence Relating Thereto*, in Command Paper 6217 (London: HMSO, 1890), p. 14. Needless to state that the Transvaal proposal, i.e., as relating to exchanging one country for another between European powers was not an innovation in colonial politics. For example, in 1889 Joseph Chamberlain had informally indicated to Herbert, son of Otto von Bismarck, German chancellor, that Germany should think of the possibility to exchange its colony of South West Africa for the British island of Heligoland. Later in 1890 John Mackenzie also suggested that Britain exchange its colony of Ashanti in West Africa for German South West Africa. See Richard A. Voeltz, "The European Economic and Political Penetration of South West Africa, 1884-1892," International Journal of African Historical Studies, 17, 4 (1984), 627-628.

considerable scholarly attention in the history of expansion of European rule in Africa.¹⁴⁸

Swaziland was converted into a pawn in the Anglo-Transvaal rivalry in southern eastern Africa. The British, for their part, did not acquiesce to the Transvaal recommendation, but instead, responded by proposing an establishment of an Anglo-Transvaal Joint Commission to inquire "into alleged conflicting interests in Swaziland, arising out of the rapid development of foreign enterprise in that country, due to the discovery of gold in 1885 and 1886, and the absence of an established European system of Government."¹⁴⁹ The Commission was instructed to make recommendations to their individual governments on the course of action on Swaziland.

Mbandzeni did not live long enough to see the results of his appeal for the restoration of order among the concessionaires by either the British or the Transvaal government. He died at the age of thirty-four from jaundice on 7 October 1889, just before the arrival of the Anglo-Transvaal Joint Commission on November 30, 1889. The Commission was received by Tibati Nkambule, the queen regent who succeeded to the Swazi throne, as the main ruler in accordance with the Swazi traditional law of succession. The Joint Commission took only about a month to complete its mission. On

¹⁴⁸Classic works on this theme are: Thomas Pakenham, The Scramble for Africa (New York: Random House, 1991), David Levering Lewis, The Race to Fashoda: European Colonialism and African Resistance in the Scramble for Africa (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987), and Walter Rodney, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, revised ed. 1982). Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher with Alice Denny, Africa and the Victorians: The Climax of Imperialism in the Dark Continent (New York: ST. Martins Press, 1961).

¹⁴⁹Letter, Loch to Knutsford, Government House, Cape Town, August 13, 1890, in Command Paper 6217, p. 14.

December 9, 1889, the Joint Commission met the Swazi leadership to inform them about their mission. When introducing the Commission to the Swazi leaders, De Winton hinted at the existence of unequal power relations between the Commission and the Swazi leaders. He told them, "you are our friends, and, if I may so put it, *our children*; and a father never hurts his child. We, the Commissioners, are, as it were, *your father*."¹⁵⁰

Besides the clearly typical paternalistic tone of this statement, which later became the hallmark of the Swazi-British relations, it reveals the quintessential mind of European colonialism which perceived Africans as perpetual children. Another scholar has aptly articulated this colonial mind as follows, "Peter Pan children who can never grow up, a child race."¹⁵¹

Of even more relevance to the theme of this work, is the fact that De Winton told the Swazi leaders only partial truth regarding the mission of his Commission to their country. He told them, "both the Governments of Great Britain and the Transvaal have *only your interests at heart*. We want your heart to beat with ours, and then if we are of one heart together we can do what is best for all. Is not that so?"¹⁵² However, he

¹⁵⁰Minutes of Proceedings of the Swaziland Joint Commission, Fourth Meeting, Camp, Embekelweni, 9th December 1889, in Annexures I to the De Winton's "Report on Swaziland," Command, 6201, p. 34. Emphasis added.

¹⁵¹Mamdani quotes Christopher Fyfe, "Race, Empire and the Historians," Race and Class 33, 4 (1992), 22. See Mahmood Mamdani, Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 4.

¹⁵²"Minutes of Proceedings of the Swaziland Joint Commission," Fourth Meeting, Camp, Embekelweni, 9th December 1889, in Annexure I to the De Winton's "Report on Swaziland," in Command, 6201, p. 34. Emphasis added.

neglected to inform them as well that the clash of economic interests of the British and Transvaal nationals and the future position of Swaziland in a region (south-eastern Africa) which was rapidly falling under European rule were some of the main reasons for the Commission's presence in Swaziland. He also omitted to tell them that when the Commission first entered Swaziland on November 30, 1889, it held a meeting with white residents in Swaziland. During that meeting the Commission informed these residents to organize themselves into a Committee and make submissions of resolutions on how they wished the Commission to address their concerns.¹⁵³

Of course, De Winton did tell the Swazi leaders that the Commission came to their country to find out their (emaSwati) wishes on the current affairs of Swaziland. The Swazi rulers had three desires which they expressed through Theophilus Shepstone, Jr. in his capacity as their interpreter:

(1) To preserve its [Swaziland] autonomy. (2) To appeal to both British and South African Republic Governments to preserve its rights. (3) The people are astonished now to find how their land has been conceded away; they ask the Commission to enquire into the concession documents and to call upon those who interpreted them to the King to repeat their interpretation before them (the people). It is only since the King's death they have found out the extent of the concessions.¹⁵⁴

The Joint Commission completed its assignment on December 19, 1889. Then,

¹⁵³For the meeting of the Joint Commission with European residents in Swaziland, see "Precis of Meeting held at Kannemeyer's on Saturday," 30th November 1889, in Annexure G of the De Winton's "Report on Swaziland," Command, 6201, p. 28. For White residents' resolutions, see "Precis of Annexure J," in *ibid.*, pp. 48-58.

¹⁵⁴"Minutes of Proceedings of the Swaziland Joint Commission," First Meeting, Embekelweni, 2nd December 1889, Annexure I of the De Winton's "Report on Swaziland," Command, 6201, p. 30.

its members returned to report on their mission to their respective constituencies. And they left behind them three distinct marks of their visit to Swaziland. First, they had formally abolished the defunct "White Committee" and replaced it with a Provisional Government Committee of three men to administer Europeans. These were Shepstone Jr. as a representative of the emaSwati, Colonel Richard Martin, to look after British interests, and D.J. Esselen, a Landdrost of Vryheid, to represent the Transvaal. This Committee was intended as a stop-gap measure to maintain law and order among Europeans, whilst the British and the Transvaal governments were deciding on the future of the "Swaziland question." It was aimed to be functional only, at least, for a period of four months.

When giving Martin instructions for his duties, De Winton informed him, "you should keep Her Majesty's Government, through his Excellency the High Commissioner, *thoroughly informed as regards all that is passing in Swaziland*, and you will watch over *the interests of all British subjects* resident in the country."¹⁵⁵ These words suggest a growing significance of Swaziland in the imperial politico-economics, for which Martin was placed in a strategical position, that of the Provisional Government Committee, to watch its development. Here we also notice the economic value of Swaziland which led to the British government's involvement in its affairs. It was the preservation of Swaziland as a sphere of British interests rather than its desire to merely protect Swazi interests, which drew the British government into the affairs of Swaziland. Therefore,

¹⁵⁵Letter, Sir F. De Winton to Colonel Martin, Enclosure in No. 167, Dauke's Hotel, December 19, 1889, Command. 6200, p. 242. Emphasis added.

when scholars refer to a twentieth-century Swaziland as a British 'protectorate' they ought to take into account that what was in fact protected by the British government were the economic interests of its subjects, and not the Swazi interests or Swazi traditional institutions. These British economic interests in Swaziland also ought to be considered as a background to a discussion of economic history of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Swaziland.¹⁵⁶

The second benchmark closely related to the above, was the creation of a seat of the European administration in the country. The Provisional Government Committee purchased Albert Bremer's hotel and land in 1890 and converted the hotel into its headquarters. Henceforth, Bremersdorp became the capital of Swaziland as far as the Europeans were concerned. Some scholars have pointed out that Bremer sold his properties on condition that his name be entrenched in the country's historical records by

¹⁵⁶ Although there is yet no written account of the economic history of Swaziland, Parsons has overlooked this phase of British economic activity in Swaziland in his brief sketch of the economic history of Swaziland. See Q.N. Parsons, "Thoughts on the Social and Economic History of Swaziland," Ngadla! A History Society Journal of U.B.S. (UCS), 1,1 (1976), 3-9. This gap also exists in another short overview of the economic history of Swaziland, see Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons, "Introduction: Historical Background," in Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons, eds., The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa (London: Heinemann, 1977), pp. 16-20. Stephen, for his part, focuses on economics in contemporary Swaziland, see Michael F. Stephen, "'Small is Beautiful': An Overview of the Swazi Economy," in John Daniel and Michael F. Stephen, eds., Historical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Swaziland: Selected Articles (University of Swaziland: Social Science Research Unit, 1986), pp. 193-219. John Daniel briefly explores economic history of Swaziland within the framework of the political economy and emphasizes the late colonial and postcolonial periods. See his article, "The Political Economy of Colonial and Post-Colonial Swaziland," South African Labour Bulletin, Vol. 7, nos. 6 & 7 (June 1982), 90-113.

naming the emerging European settlement after his name.¹⁵⁷ However, for the purpose of this study, the main significance of the establishment of the Committee's headquarters at Bremersdorp is that it signified an emergence of a European power base outside the purview of the Swazi monarchy at Embekelweni. It was here at Bremersdorp that the Anglo-Transvaal power was to grow rapidly that by the end of 1894 it superimposed itself on the Swazi monarchical power by establishing a Transvaal 'protectorate' status in Swaziland through the instrument of the Anglo-Transvaal Convention of 1894. Then, in 1898, this Anglo-Transvaal power took a further step towards the colonization of Swaziland, when it stripped the Swazi monarchy of its ability to formulate and to apply administrative laws on its subjects. This was done through the 1898 Protocol which amended the Anglo-Transvaal Convention of 1894. Thus, the Committee ought to be understood as a basis for the development of a counter political power to that of the Swazi monarchy in the affairs of Swaziland. Put differently, the Committee served as a voice of the European settler community in the affairs of Swaziland.

We may also observe here that the formal establishment of a second power base to that of the monarchy meant a first real step toward a division of the political affairs of Swaziland into Swazi 'traditional' authority, which lay within the jurisdiction of the monarchy and the European western-style, under the Provisional Government Committee. Henceforth, such a division of the power politics in the country was perpetuated to this day, whereby the monarchy controls Swazi politics as perceived to

¹⁵⁷Bulpin, Storm, pp. 151-152. For a slightly different view to this, see Jones, Biographical, p. 45.

embody the 'traditional' life-style, and western-style parliamentary system, which is ostensibly responsible for the parliamentary system, inherited from the British colonial rule.

The third mark of the Joint Commission was its acknowledgment of Bhunu as a legitimate heir to the Swazi throne. At this point the Commission recognized Bhunu as a King of Swaziland, and not a Paramount Chief, a diminution of his title of kingship which only occurred in 1898 when the Anglo-Transvaal governments finally stripped him of his legal administrative powers. Tikhuba Magongo, a most senior Swazi councilor and a spokesperson for the Swazi leaders, also informed the Commission that during the minority of the King, the Queen Regent was effectively the head of the nation. All the affairs of the country had to be discussed with her.¹⁵⁸ The acceptance of the Queen Regent as the head of the nation by the Commission meant that this position of a woman figure in Swazi politics received a further endorsement of the emerging European power in Swaziland.

The recognition of Labotsibeni's son as King of Swaziland by the Joint Commission, removed any lingering doubts about the legitimacy of the heir among those who had contended the throne. Here it will be recalled that Mbandzeni himself had received blessings from the Transvaal government, which had sent a commando of four hundred men during his coronation ceremony. Thus, for Bhunu to receive the blessings

¹⁵⁸Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the Commission with the Swazi leaders, Camp, Embekelweni, 9th December 1889, in Annexure I of the De Winton's Report, Command, 6201, p. 33.

of the Joint Commission, was no small measure toward sitting him and his mother securely on the reigns of the country, at least, as far as the matters purely Swazi were concerned. And with the political stability in the royal family, power relations between the Swazi rulers and the Europeans would unfold without being interrupted by issues of succession.

After he had first hand information on the situation in Swaziland De Winton wrote in his report, it:

is time-honored maxim, and one often quoted, that 'trade follows the flag,' and this has been true in the past, but is not wise to rely solely upon this saying for the future, for my experience is that trade in Africa follows the lines of which energy, business capacity, and a commercial knowledge of geography, are foundations; and there appears to me no reason why the commerce and trade of Swazieland [sic] should not remain in the hands of British subjects, whatever may be the future of Swazieland, provided their present rights are respected, and that they maintain their supremacy in the qualities above mentioned.¹⁵⁹

Here De Winton acknowledged as a *fait accompli* the point that in Swaziland business investments by British subjects had preceded the hoisting of a Union Jack flag. And yet, apparently with the Transvaal government's suggestion for a free hand in the affairs of Swaziland looming in the back of his mind, he expressed an idea that Transvaal could be allowed to do so, as long as it would respect the rights of the British interests holders in the country. In Swaziland, therefore, we have an example of a situation which preceded the development of the concept of a "condominium" administration in the

¹⁵⁹De Winton, "Report on Swaziland," Enclosure No. 3, in Command. 6201, p. 9. For further observations on Swaziland and for more information on the work of the Anglo-Transvaal Joint Commission on Swaziland, see also R.S.S. Baden-Powell, "1889 Swaziland Expedition" (MSB 66; C 1984, South African Library, Cape Town). Baden-Powell was Secretary to the Anglo-Transvaal Joint Commission to Swaziland in 1889.

British colonial policy in Africa.¹⁶⁰ De Winton also observed that the ability of the emaSwati to maintain their independence was gradually coming to an end, and that eventually the emaSwati ought to be placed under a European colonial power. He asserted, "as regards the independence of the nation, much depends on the tact of Mr. T. Shepstone. Whichever Government assumes the control of the White population, great care will have to be exercised in dealing with the natives at the outset. *They would have to be gradually absorbed, and thus in process of time eventually come under White control.*"¹⁶¹ De Winton's views on the independence of Swaziland and the eventual colonization of the country represent a hidden transcript with regard to the Anglo-Swazi relations, because they were never communicated to the emaSwati leaders. They also confirm what has already been observed by scholars of imperial history elsewhere in Africa, that in certain areas the British imperial government had introduced its rule in piecemeal form to an extent that "colonial peoples sometimes hardly realised that they had become subject to imperial authority, until it was altogether too late for them to do very much about it."¹⁶² In the case of Swaziland, this becomes clear in the early

¹⁶⁰The concept of a "condominium" in British colonial Africa developed fully in the Sudan during the Anglo-Egyptian administration from 1899-1955. There is a thick literature on this subject in the history of the Sudan. Suffices it here to draw attention to the most recent account of such a history, see P.M. Holt, and M.W. Daly, A History of the Sudan From the Coming of Islam to the Present Day (London: Longman, 4th ed., & 3rd impression, 1994), chapter 8.

¹⁶¹De Winton, "Report on Swaziland," Enclosure No. 3, in Command. 6201, pp. 12-13. Emphasis added.

¹⁶²D.A. Low, "Lion Rampant," Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, II, 3 (November 1964), 245. Low has examined the introduction of British imperial authority

twentieth-century when the British colonial government began to make more demands that were typical of a colonial situation: demands such as taxes, labor, monopoly to exercise administrative powers over the whole country.

Unlike in many British colonies in Africa, British colonialism in Swaziland did not follow military conquest. Instead, the British laid claim to Swaziland through their defeat of the South African Republic (Transvaal) during the South African War, 1899 - 1902. Swaziland was administered by the Transvaal since 1894 when the Anglo-Transvaal governments delegated the Transvaal to administer Swaziland as a separate entity. But, the outbreak of the South African War in October 1899 resulted in the end of the Transvaal Boer administration and the restoration of the Swazi monarchical rule.¹⁶³

When the Transvaal Boer administration was established in 1894 the Swazi frontier was partially closed, not to be reopened until the Transvaal Government restored political control to the Swazi monarchy in October 1899 in the wake of the South African War, 1899 to 1902. An Anglo-Transvaal Convention which made provision for the creation of the Transvaal administration in Swaziland was signed on 10 December 1894. It is important to note that this Convention protected the interests of British subjects, as well as those of the Transvaal Republic.¹⁶⁴ Herein lay the main principle of the British government regarding the Anglo-Transvaal cooperation in the affairs of Swaziland: the

in the Kingdoms of Uganda.

¹⁶³See chapter 5.

¹⁶⁴Confidential, Amended draft Report on Swaziland, 1902, Lagden, 3rd March 1903, J64/03, SNA.

protection of the interests of British subjects.

The reopening of the frontier was not acceptable to the Boer and British capitalists who had long-established economic interests in Swaziland through concessions. Certainly, the idea of the closing or opening of a frontier had loomed large in the minds of the British policy makers. For instance, in 1898 Milner observed that the Transvaal government's actions in Swaziland were leading to the final closure of that frontier. In anticipation of what might happen to the emaSwati after the frontier has been closed, Milner wrote, "personally holding as I do that 'a door must be either open or shut,' I think it must end in, but that we can provide, both on paper and in fact, for their [Transvaal Government] Courts dealing fairly with the Natives."¹⁶⁵ Indeed, he helped the Transvaal to finally close the frontier on October 5, 1898, when Britain and the Transvaal signed the protocol to the Convention of 1894.

Milner was the main architect of the protocol. When drafting the Protocol, he wished to make far reaching provisions than to merely confine himself to solving the immediate crisis of the alleged involvement of King Bhunu in the death of Mbhabha, a crisis which revealed to the Anglo-Transvaal governments that they had so far no legal ground or instrument to try the Swazi king on matters purely between him and his subjects. He did this by stripping off some major administrative legal power from not

¹⁶⁵Private and Confidential letter from Sir A. Milner to Edmund Fraser, July 8, 1898, in Cecil Headlam, ed., The Milner Papers: South Africa, 1897-1899, vol. 1 (London: Cassell & Company, 1931), p. 188. Fraser had been transferred from the Legation at Brussels to work with Conyngham Greene, British Agent at Pretoria. Fraser was now Acting British Agent during Greene's absence.

only King Bhunu, whom through this protocol had his title of kingship demoted to that of the Paramount Chief - in keeping with developments in other British colonies in Africa, but also those of any future incumbent of this office.¹⁶⁶

The protocol amended the Convention of 1894, which had partially closed the frontier, but had proved unworkable because of the emaSwati resistance to the Boer administration and of Anglo-Transvaal mutual jealousy in the country. The protocol stripped off the Swazi monarchy of all powers to shape the destiny of the Swazi state and such powers were transferred to the Transvaal government. Thereafter, the institution of the monarchy became a hollow shell with largely symbolic significance.¹⁶⁷ However, Milner's concern with a fair treatment of the emaSwati is open to question, as the British actions in early twentieth-century Swaziland will be shown in subsequent chapters of this work.

Recently, one scholar has defined the frontier in the South African context, "as a zone of interpenetration between previously distinct societies. The frontier opens when first white settlers, representatives of an intrusive society, arrive, and closes when a single political authority has eventually established its hegemony over the indigenous peoples,

¹⁶⁶For Milner's views on opinions expressed by the Transvaal President Paul Kruger on the draft Protocol, see his letter to a British representative in the Transvaal, marked, Confidential, South African Republic, 3rd September 1898, in J.S.M. Matsebula Papers, Special Collection, University of Swaziland.

¹⁶⁷For a discussion of this, see Genge, "Law," pp. 137-150. See also the "Protocol" in document No. 31, Correspondentie van De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, No. 2, 1899 (Pretoria, 1899), pp. 38-39.

normally through force."¹⁶⁸ That the frontier did not close in this common way in Swaziland is key to understanding power relations in Swazi history. This work argues that, the absence of the use of force by European powers in closing a frontier in Swaziland resulted largely from a long tradition of the emaSwati's collaboration with Europeans in their subjugation of other regional powers, African and European, and from the monarchy's diplomacy, especially that of Queen Regent Labotsibeni. Other scholars have observed features of a frontier in Swaziland, but without either defining it or employing this concept as an analytical tool in their studies.¹⁶⁹

The extent of expansion of European capitalism into Swaziland threatened the sovereignty of the country as it had done in other parts of the world.¹⁷⁰ Besides, the existence of the only independent kingdom in southern Africa would have gone against the British imperial interests of consolidating its possessions in the region. With the defeat of the Boers in May 1902, Swaziland remained the only country which had not experienced British military conquest. And it was surrounded by European occupied territories: British Transvaal on its north-west, Natal British colony on the south and Portuguese Lourenco Marques on its eastern border.

¹⁶⁸Laband, Kingdom, p. 4.

¹⁶⁹See Crush, Struggle, p. 209.

¹⁷⁰The introduction of European capitalism in Swaziland has received a considerable scholarly attention, see Crush, Struggle; Alan Booth, "Development of the Swazi Labour Market, 1900-1968," South African Labour Bulletin, 7, Nos. 6 & 7 (June 1982), 34-57; Mlahagwa, "Capital," and Hamilton Sipho Simelane, Capital Penetration and Commercial Afforestation in Swaziland, 1947-1962 (M.A. thesis, Ohio University, Athens, 1985).

The emaSwati were military allies of the Transvaal Boers and the British when the two latter powers conquered the BaPedi Kingdom, 1876 and 1879, and were on standby during the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, and fought on the British side in the recent South African War, 1899-1902. All along, the British had rewarded the emaSwati, though with mixed results, for being their allies. For example, in 1881 and 1884 the British Government and the South African Republican (Transvaal) Government signed an undertaking to guarantee the independence of Swaziland, and during the South African War the British military authorities authorized the emaSwati to confiscate Boer live-stock as partial compensation for providing military assistance against the Boers.

Summary

The Swazi-Anglo-Boer relations as discussed in this chapter were fraught with hidden agendas from the Swazi, the British and Boers. The Swazi rulers attempted to stay outside the British control or domination by employing their own agent, Shepstone, to handle their dealings with Europeans. The concept of public and private transcript has proved a useful analytical tool in analyzing the Swazi-British-Boer relations, for it allows us to transcend the public pronouncements from all the concerned parties, and to understand motivations behind such public transcripts.

This chapter has demonstrated that there was a power play among the governments of Swaziland, Britain and the Transvaal, and all these powers pursued different agendas to maneuver power in Swaziland. The Swazi monarchy was concerned with securing a safe position in the face of the Anglo-Transvaal encroachment upon the

affairs of the Swazi state. The monarchy had put its investments for the Anglo-Transvaal friendships by forming military alliances with these European powers against other African states in the mid to late 1870s. And the Anglo-Transvaal governments had acknowledged such investments by guaranteeing to safeguard the independence and integrity of Swaziland when they signed the Pretoria and London Conventions, 1881 and 1884, respectively.

The early period of Swazi-Anglo-Boer relations and King Mbandzeni's diplomatic maneuvering during the concessions period of 1884 to 1889 provided Labotsibeni with ample precedents for her skillful negotiations with the British during her era as Queen Mother and Queen Regent, from 1890 to 1921. This chapter has provided a background to Labotsibeni's era by analyzing the development of Swazi-Anglo-Boer relations from the late 1870s to the 1890s.

In the next chapter, we will deal with the shifting roles in Swazi power relations following the death of King Mbandzeni in 1889. I discuss Labotsibeni's rise to a position of queen mother which allowed her prominence in Swazi politics. I also examine the manner in which the governments of Great Britain and Transvaal imposed their colonial rule in Swaziland and the Swazi queens' resistance to the imposition of colonial rule.

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**POWER AND GENDER IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN HISTORY: POWER
RELATIONS IN THE ERA OF QUEEN LABOTSIBENI
GWAMILE MDLULI OF SWAZILAND, ca. 1875-1921**

VOLUME II

By

Manelisi Genge

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Department of History

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Chapter Five

SHIFTING ROLES IN SWAZI POWER RELATIONS: SWAZI QUEENS, THE BRITISH AND THE TRANSVAAL BOERS

Labotsibeni Gwamile Mdluli, popularly known to the Swazi generations of this century as Mgwami,¹ played a central role in the history of Swazi politics in three distinct capacities, as queen from 1874 to October 1889, queen mother from November 1889 to December 10, 1899 and as queen regent from December 1899 to 1921. From November 1889 to December 1899, she was in theory a co-ruler with her son, King Ngwane V, popularly known as Bhunu or Mahlokohla. But, in practice, she was the main effective leader with Bhunu under her shadow, for she was the "brains behind the throne."² And from December 1899 to 1921 she served as the queen regent for her grandson Nkhotfotjeni, who she gave an additional name Mona by which he became

¹According to Hilda Kuper, the name Gwamile or Mgwami is from a siSwati verb gwamile, which means "stand firm and unshakable, to be indomitable, adamant." Kuper reminds us that Labotsibeni was commemorated by the Swazi nation in 1975, International Women's Year. See Hilda Kuper, Sobhuza II Ngwenyama and King of Swaziland: The story of an hereditary ruler and his country (London: Duckworth, 1978), p.18. Thoko Ginindza points out that Labotsibeni earned an appellation Mgwami as recognition of the manner in which she dealt with the affairs of Swaziland from 1890 to 1921, especially as they relate to the Europeans. See Ginindza, "Labotsibeni," in Flora Edouwaye S. Kaplan, ed. Queens, Queen Mothers, Priestesses, and Power: Case Studies in African Gender (New York: Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, Vol. 810, 1997), p. 139. However, this seems as an overstatement of why Labotsibeni was named Gwamile. It appears reasonable to suggest that in her deeds she followed closely the meaning of her name by being firm and adamant in her dealings with Europeans, but not that her actions preceded the appellation or the naming of her as Gwamile.

²Owen Rowe O'Neil, Adventures in Swaziland: The Story of a South African Boer (New York: The Century Co., 1921), p. 67.

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popularly known, who upon chosen to succeed to the Swazi throne was renamed King Sobhuza II. As had often been the case in precolonial Swaziland, the death of King Mbandzeni in October 1889, and the appointment of his fourteen year old son, Bhunu, as an heir to the throne, meant that Swazi politics would be directed by regents, especially the queens, during the minority of the heir. This happened again in December 1899 when Ngwane V died and his son Nkhotfotjeni, alias Mona, a four month old infant, was chosen to succeed him.

The era from 1890 to 1899 was dominated by the introduction of western-style politics in Swaziland with its legal system in the shapes of the Provisional Government Committee of December 1889, and the Chief Court which at one point had briefly reconstituted itself into a Concessions Court of 1890. In 1894 the British and the Transvaal governments imposed a Transvaal 'protectorate' status over Swaziland. From 1890s to 1898 the Transvaal and the British governments signed a series of conventions and a protocol, which in their sum had an effect of submerging the authority of the Swazi state under the Transvaal government, without necessarily annexing Swaziland to the Transvaal. In 1898 the Swazi king lost his original status as king of Swaziland, at least in the eyes of Anglo-Transvaal governments and those of Europeans in Swaziland, when Anglo-Transvaal governments expropriated from him some of his major administrative powers, and restyled him the Paramount Chief. The new title of the Paramount Chief was in keeping in line with British colonial trends in Africa, which abolished the titles of

kingship and replaced them with the term Paramount Chief.³ It was also during the 1890s that the emaSwati were recruited for the first time to work in the mines in South Africa and to other European generated employment areas in Swaziland.⁴

In this chapter I explore the manner in which Swazi rulers maintained their power base in the context of the abovementioned new developments in their country. The chapter also examines the rise to power of Labotsibeni from a wider pool of Swazi queens to national prominence and how Great Britain and the Transvaal colonized Swaziland. I make three arguments. First, Labotsibeni self-consciously worked her way up to the Swazi throne from being merely one of the queens of King Mbandzeni to becoming an *indhlovukati* (queen-mother). She was able to do so largely due to her own shrewdness. Second, I contend that the Swazi monarchy presented itself as a cohesive polity when it challenged the establishment of European colonial rule in Swaziland and countered attempts by British and Transvaal governments to undermine its unity. Third, I argue that the governments of Great Britain and Transvaal established a European-style government to protect the economic interests of their subjects in Swaziland.

³For a discussion of these events, though without necessarily focusing specifically on the role of Labotsibeni, see J.S.M. Matsebula, A History of Swaziland (Cape Town: Longman, 3rd edition, 1988), chapter 10, and Manelisi Genge, "Law and the Imposition of Colonial Rule in Swaziland, 1890-1898" (MA thesis, Ohio University, Athens, 1992), chapters III, IV and V.

⁴See Jonathan Crush, The Struggle for Swazi Labour, 1890-1920 (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987). Crush, just like Matsebula and Genge, does not focus on the role of Labotsibeni. Instead, he situates his discussion within the narrow confines of labor history.

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Labotsibeni Becomes Queen Mother

The history of Labotsibeni's involvement in the affairs of Swaziland has and still is attracting the attention of observers and scholars alike. And yet there is not a systematic study on her political career. Early European observers either cast her in a prejudicial manner, for they perceived her and the Swazi culture in general as obstacles to their work in Swaziland, or limited their attention to describing her physical features.⁵ The Swazi royalists' interests in the work of Labotsibeni reveal this group's natural concern with matters of genealogy with the Swazi aristocracy. This kind of concern is aimed at establishing an aristocracy's legitimacy in occupying a certain position within the Swazi ruling aristocracy. Therefore, their efforts ought not to be treated as historical analyses of Labotsibeni's contribution to the history of Swaziland.⁶ For their part,

⁵For this view, see for instance a work by one of the early missionaries in Swaziland, C.C. Watts, Dawn in Swaziland (Westminster: The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1922), and for physical descriptions, see O'Neil, Swaziland, pp. 64-65. For a brief summary of how Labotsibeni was treated in contemporary sources, see Balam H.L. Nyeko, "The Swazi Leadership's Response to Colonial Rule, 1902-1930" (D. Phil., Makerere University, March 1977), pp. 70-72.

⁶For this royalist view, see for example, Prince Arthur Magangeni Dlamini, "Brief Points on the History of Gwamile." Prince Dlamini works at the National Treasury Office, Lobamba, Swaziland. I had occasional conversations with him on Labotsibeni in August 1996, during my fieldwork in Swaziland. It was during this time that he gave me his rough notes on Labotsibeni and I am greatly indebted to him for sharing his notes with me and for the time he spent talking with me about my work. My sincere thanks also go to Sibongile Nxumalo, an archivist at the Swazi National Archives, for agreeing to graciously introduce me to Prince Dlamini. Without her introduction, I very much doubt that I would have been able to secure an appointment with Dlamini. Prince Dlamini's notes are, however, of less value to the study of Labotsibeni, except as far as they establish her genealogy. In fact, scholars of Swazi history may find Huw M. Jones, A Biographical Register of Swaziland to 1902 (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1993), a far better source than Dlamini's notes.

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scholars have either lumped Labotsibeni together with other Swazi leaders without distinguishing her individual contribution to the history of Swaziland, or they have presented her biographical sketch with merely anecdotal information of what she did during her life-time.⁷ Others have examined the Swazi leaders' resistance to Boer control at the turn of the century. But they have done so within the narrower confines of the history of resistance without emphasizing power relations.⁸ Hilda Kuper, an anthropologist who has written extensively on Swaziland, observed about Labotsibeni that, "events of her early life are among the essentials of Sobhuza's [II] story and are recounted by him on many occasions."⁹ This remark not only subsumes Labotsibeni's contribution under a male figure, a king, but it also conceptually deprives her of her independent historical moment and agency in the history of Swaziland. Here therefore,

⁷For a view of lumping Labotsibeni together with other Swazi leaders, see Balam Nyeko, "Pre-Nationalist Resistance to Colonial Rule: Swaziland on the Eve of the Imposition of British Administration, 1890-1902" (a copy of this paper is located in the Special Collection, Library, University of Swaziland. The copy has no date.), pp. 1-9, and Balam Nyeko, "African Initiatives and Responses in Colonial Swaziland: The Swazi Leaders and the Land Question, 1902-26," Paper presented to the International Conference on Southern African History at the National University of Lesotho, Roma, 1st-7th August, 1977, pp. 2-12. (Copy of this paper is available at the University of Swaziland, Library, Specially Collection.). For a view which presents biographical sketches of Labotsibeni, see Ackson M. Kanduza, "Labotsibeni Gwamile LaMdluli (or LaMvelasi), c. 1858-1925," n.d., pp. 1-15. (I am indebted to Kanduza for sharing this paper with me in 1996 when I went to Swaziland for my fieldwork.) See also Ginindza, "Labotsibeni," in Kaplan, ed. Queens, 135-158. Kanduza and Ginindza rely heavily on Kuper, Sobhuza II, in their reconstruction of Labotsibeni's history.

⁸See for example, Hamilton Sipho Simelane, "Swazi Resistance to Boer Penetration and Domination, 1881-1898," Transafrican Journal of History, 18 (1989), 117-146.

⁹Kuper, Sobhuza II, p.18. Ginindza quotes this statement from Kuper. See Ginindza, "Labotsibeni," in Kaplan, ed. Queens, p. 136.

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we have an example of what scholars of women's and gender studies have drawn attention to, regarding reasons for the invisibility of women in history.¹⁰ In their sum, the above-mentioned approaches to Labotsibeni have left us with a largely incomplete history of her role, in spite of the fact that she was one of the main players in the history of Swaziland from about 1875 until her death in 1925. Even worse, some of these scholars have relegated Labotsibeni to the status of "a power behind the scenes."¹¹ Henceforth, this view of Labotsibeni as "a power behind the scenes" has been uncritically accepted and perpetuated by some scholars of Swazi history.¹²

And yet, a careful reading of sources indicates that Labotsibeni was the main pillar of the Swazi monarchical power from 1890 to 1921. One observer noted after meeting her that she was "very cunning and intelligent," and he henceforth understood the common belief that Labotsibeni was the "brains behind the throne" in Swaziland.¹³ It was in fact her co-ruler kings who remained weak or were being made by her behind the throne, while she openly directed the affairs of the throne. This observation ought to be taken seriously, if we are to shift scholarly attention away from a preoccupation with the rule of the kings in Swaziland. This preoccupation has to this date remained a dominant

¹⁰For a discussion of this point, see Helen Bradford, "Women, Gender and Colonialism: Rethinking the History of the British Cape Colony and Its Frontier Zones, c. 1806-70," *Journal of African History*, 37 (1996), 351-370.

¹¹Kuper, *Sobhuza II*, p.18.

¹²See, for instance, Ginindza's subtitle in her work, "Labotsibeni/Gwamile Mdluli: The Power Behind the Swazi Throne, 1875-1925," in Kaplan, ed., *Queens*, and Kanduza, "Labotsibeni," p. 9.

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theme, and has pushed to obscurity a need to study the role of queen mothers and queen regents, who have played an equal and sometimes more important role in the history of Swazi politics, but amid a patriarchal society.

This chapter attempts to demonstrate the central role played by Labotsibeni in the last decade of the nineteenth-century in the affairs of Swaziland. Contrary to the above mentioned views which perceive Labotsibeni as “a power behind the scenes,” the evidence shows that she was in fact a power who openly directed the affairs of the country, from the front door of the Swazi monarchy. She started out by reconstituting a weak and politically shaky monarchy by removing and replacing certain individuals within the structure of the monarchy. This chapter is not concerned about the manner in which Labotsibeni came to the royal circle, and how she became King Mbandzeni’s wife, for this has already been discussed elsewhere in this work.¹⁴ Instead, here I am concerned with how she rose to a position of prominence to become the queen mother.

Until very recently many scholars of Swazi history have taken ‘Swazi tradition’ as a matrix from which to examine the events of the country. The primacy of the so-called ‘tradition’ in the scholarship of Swaziland could be arguably explained as an indication of the dominance of anthropological works in shaping an academic agenda and the scholarly vocabulary.¹⁵ Even some historians, political scientists and legal academics have taken

¹³O’Neil, Swaziland, pp. 66-67.

¹⁴See chapter 3 above.

¹⁵Major anthropological works on Swaziland are the following: Hilda Kuper, An African Aristocracy: Rank Among the Swazi (London: Oxford University Press, first published in

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Swazi tradition as their point of departure with very little criticism of such a tradition.¹⁶

The result has been a narrow interpretation of historical events in Swaziland. Yet the coming of Europeans to Swaziland in the 1880s and more significantly in the 1890s affected Swazi society in almost all walks of life including its practices and traditions which have always been in a state of flux. Notwithstanding this, scholarship on Swaziland has largely remained unreceptive to criticisms by other scholars of historians' reliance on anthropological concepts.¹⁷

Indeed, the choice of Labotsibeni as the queen mother defies any explanation based on Swazi 'tradition' regarding her rise to such a position. This is so because she did not meet some of the important conventional qualifications for her son to succeed to the throne as a king. As noted above, she had four children: three sons and one daughter, aspects which had normally been regarded as sufficient reasons to exclude any eligible

1945, and reprinted 1961 and 1965); Hilda Kuper, The Swazi: A South African Kingdom (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963); Kuper, Sobhuza II, and to some extent, Brian Allan Marwick, The Swazi: An Ethnographic Account of the Natives of the Swaziland Protectorate (London: Frank Cass, 1966), and J.S. Malan, Swazi Culture (Pretoria: Institute of South Africa, 1985).

¹⁶For example, see Nkondo A. Hlatshwayo, "The Ideology of Traditionalism and its Implications for Principles of Constitutionalism: The Case of Swaziland" (LM. Thesis, York University, Ontario, 1992); Hugh Macmillan, "Swaziland: Decolonization and the Triumph of 'Tradition'," Journal of Modern African Studies, 23, 4 (1985), 643-666; Alan R. Booth, Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983), and Christian P. Potholm, Swaziland: The Dynamics of Political Modernization (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

¹⁷For such criticisms, see W.D. Hammond-Tooke, "Descent Groups, Chieftdoms and South African Historiography," Journal of Southern African Studies, II, 2 (April 1985), 305-319.

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queen for consideration for the position of queen mother.¹⁸ Therefore, we have to look elsewhere rather than explanations based on tradition, to understand the reasons for her choice as the queen mother. This work argues that such reasons are traceable to Labotsibeni's character, and her understanding of Swazi politics - - she deliberately positioned herself within the politics of the monarchy in a way that was compatible with the Swazi monarchy's view of the changes brought about by the coming of Europeans to Swaziland. Assessing the reasons for Labotsibeni's accomplishments as *Ndlovukati*, Thoko Ginindza notes her "indomitable character" and comments:

Both the Swazi and the whites of her time commented on her outstanding intelligence, her mental grip, perception, wit, determination, self-assurance, and energy, her skill in conducting discussions, her shrewd judgment and ability to unravel the most intricate Swazi disputes, her adamancy, indomitability, and her dignity even in old age as well as her powers of rain making.¹⁹

An unidentified colonial observer remarked significantly that Labotsibeni "in her astute capacity for clinging to power, reminds one in many ways of the late Chinese Empress."²⁰ Here then we have a woman who would have long ago attracted scholarly attention had she been a man, especially at a time when scholars of southern of Africa

¹⁸For a discussion of this, see chapter 3 above.

¹⁹Thoko Ginindza, "Labotsibeni," in Kaplan, ed., *Queens*, p.136. Italics added. Kanduza emphasizes the same traits on Labotsibeni and some of his assertions still lack sufficient evidence to be taken seriously. See Kanduza, "Labotsibeni," pp. 2-3.

²⁰The author's name is only signed as K.A.R., "Sayings of 'Ndela: Queen and Rain Ruler." This newspaper article has no date and the name of a newspaper, but other newspaper clippings in the same file are dated February and September 1938. They are from *The Star* newspaper, Johannesburg. (File information: Swaziland; A1810, McKay Press Clippings: Personalities; Historical and Literary Papers, The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.)

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produced numerous works on great male leaders.²¹ Her omission along with other women like her is indicative of the once dominant pervasive male bias in western scholarship which had assumed a male-centered universe.²²

Indeed, the presence of European concessionaires within the borders of Swaziland, and the collapse of the "White Committee" in 1889 which was created in 1887 to administer the affairs of the concessionaires must have been serious concerns for the ailing King Mbandzeni and other royalists regarding a post-Mbandzeni era. It appears that Mbandzeni foresaw from his deathbed the potential chaos that might befall his kingdom as a result of the usual succession disputes, should he die without appointing his successor. Unlike the previous Swazi kings, he reigned at a time when his country was under constant threat from being overwhelmed by Europeans from the Transvaal and Britain. Evidently upon reflecting on his own rise to power and the role of the Transvaal government in providing crucial support to his candidacy during his coronation ceremony, thereby warding off any doubts about his legitimacy as king, he wished to avoid a repeat of such a drawn-out succession struggle which might ensue after his

²¹See a collection of essays in Christopher Saunders, ed., Black Leaders in Southern African History (London: Heinemann, 1979); Leonard Thompson, Survival in Two Worlds: Moshoeshe of Lesotho 1786-1870 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); Hilda Kuper, Sobhuza II Ngwenyama and King of Swaziland: The story of an hereditary ruler and his country (London: Duckworth, 1978), and more recently Timothy J. Stapleton, Maqoma: Xhosa Resistance to Colonial Advance, 1798-1873 (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1994).

²²For an early discussion of this bias elsewhere by Africanist scholars, see Elinor Sosne, "Of Biases and Queens: The Shi Past Through an Androgynous Looking Glass," History in Africa, 6 (1979), 225-252.

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death.²³ Since it was generally known within the royal circles that he was very sick, it is reasonable to speculate that such a struggle was already looming large on the horizon as various queens were positioning themselves for a position of *indhlovukati* (queen mother, i.e., mother of the designated heir) in anticipation of his death.

There were four other queens who vied with Labotsibeni for the position of *ndhlovukati*. Two of these were Ncenekile Simelane, prince Masumphe's mother, and the childless laMndzebele, daughter of Dukuzi of Mkhondvo. Among other qualifications, these two queens advanced the claims that they were eligible for the throne because they were descendants from important houses, which had a history of providing queens to the Swazi kings.²⁴ The news of the queens' contestation for the position of queen mother in anticipation of the imminent death of King Mbandzeni which would create two political positions to be filled: that of a king and a queen mother, reached Mbandzeni on his deathbed.

However, apparently Mbandzeni had realized that the days of choosing a queen mother based on traditional criteria: descent and character, were over. The country needed a queen mother who knew the kind of politics which now faced the country. And

²³For a discussion of Mbandzeni's rise to kingship; its complications and the Transvaal government's involvement, see Balam Nyeko, "Pre-Nationalist Resistance to Colonial Rule: Swaziland on the Eve of the Imposition of British Administration, 1890-1902" (A paper presented at the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, History Workshop, Gaborone, Botswana, September 3-8, 1973), pp. 7-8, and Philip Bonner, Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires: The Evolution and Dissolution of the Nineteenth-Century Swazi State (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983), chapter 8.

²⁴Matsebula, History, p. 150.

Labotsibeni fitted such a view for she was already in control of the crucial levers of royal power and had been well-exposed to the monarchy's handling of European concessionaires in the country. Thus contrary to the established practice whereby the heir had been usually chosen after the death of a king, before his death King Mbandzeni appointed one of his sons, Bhunu, a boy of fourteen years old, as heir to the throne.²⁵ In fact there is still no consensus among scholars of Swazi history regarding the exact time of the appointment of either Bhunu or Labotsibeni to the positions of the heir and queen mother. The discrepancy is about whether this took place before or after King Mbandzeni's death. According to Hilda Kuper, Labotsibeni was appointed after Mbandzeni's death. However, she mentions that there was a heated exchange of words among the Inner Selection Council²⁶ of the royal members, a debate which preceded the appointment of Labotsibeni.

The Inner Selection Council²⁷ was divided over two candidates for the position of

²⁵Matsebula, *History*, p.150, and Jones, *Register*, p. 95.

²⁶Kuper, *Sobhuza II*, p. 31. According to Brian Allan Marwick, in general terms the succession to the kingship rested with the decision of the *bantfanenkosi*, i.e., princes or children of the king. "They are sons of the king, or sons of sons of a king." See Marwick, *The Swazi*, p. 266. Of course, to this must be added the queen mother who had co-ruled the country with the king whose death leads to succession decision.

²⁷From written accounts of Swazi history, there is no indication as to when exactly was the Inner Council or *Liqogo*, as referred to by the emaSwati, formally constituted. Balam Nyeko only mentions that the *Liqogo* was broadened in the nineteenth century, from its earlier form of being composed of by the Dlamini family, to incorporate the wisest men in the country together with the territorial chiefs and the tindvuna, i.e., chief commoner officials. See Balam Nyeko, "The Rule of the Dlamini in Nineteenth-Century Swaziland," *Tarikh*, Vol. 4 (1972), 46. Alan R. Booth does not mention a date for the formation of the *Liqogo*. He only states, "the inner council (*liqogo*) is an evolution of the Nkosi Dlamini

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queen mother. One section favored queen Ncenekile Simelane, a daughter of chief Ntjingila Simelane²⁸ from the Simelane clan. The Simelane clan had a history of providing a queen mother for the Swazi kings. For example, King Sobhuza I's (also known as Somhlolo) mother came from the Simelane clan. And Ncenekile Simelane, who competed for the position of queen mother against Labotsibeni, had a young son named Masumphe. The other section backed Labotsibeni's candidacy. This section included powerful figures such as the then queen mother Tibati Madvolomafisha Nkambule, and her son Prince Logcogco Dlamini.²⁹ Labotsibeni's son Bhunu was considered to be of the appropriate age because he could soon assume the duties of kingship as compared with the younger Masumphe whose choice would have led to a longer regency. But, more importantly, it is reported that "Mbandzeni himself had expressed as a wish that [Labotsibeni] be appointed [to the position of *ndhlovukati*]; her son [Bhunu] would sire the true successor to Kingship."³⁰ In Kuper's view the crucial

clan council and hence is primarily aristocratic. Membership is small (around thirty) and highly prestigious." See Booth, Swaziland, p. 45.

²⁸Chief Ntjingila Simelane was one of the important chiefs in the royal establishment. In spite of his daughter's failure to win the position of queen mother, Ntjingila continued to play crucial roles in the monarchy until his death in 1928. For a discussion of Ntjingila's activities, See Jones, Register, pp. 544-5.

²⁹Prince Logcogco was born in about 1860 and died in 1922. He played a significant part in the affairs of Swaziland. For a discussion of his role in the affairs of the country, see Jones, Register, pp. 109-110.

³⁰Kuper, Sobhuza II, p. 26. Huw M. Jones has accepted Kuper's view that the appointment of these two figures occurred after Mbandzeni's death. See Jones, Register, p. 400.

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points which earned Labotsibeni the choice of queen mother were her “outstanding intelligence, ability, character and experience....[Labotsibeni’s] wisdom, her perception, her wit and determination were already recognized and respected.”³¹ Labotsibeni’s counterpart Ncenekile was on the contrary, perceived by the Inner Selection Council to lack an appropriate character for a queen mother. For example, Ncenekile is reported to have had a “violent temper.”³² Thus queen Ncenekile Simelane lost the race for the position of queen mother.

After the appointment of the queen mother, then, followed that of the heir. Logically, following the appointment of his mother Labotsibeni, Bhunu was appointed as heir to succeed his father, King Mbandzeni. Here, we must emphasize a point which has been observed by other scholars of Swazi history, that Bhunu’s choice was neither based on his own leadership qualities nor on his character, but on that of his mother.³³ His mother Labotsibeni became *ndhlovukati* (the queen mother). However, even after the queen mother and the heir were chosen rumors that there were still rival claimants to the throne continued unabated. This apparently presented a threat to the newly appointed heads of state. It is claimed that Shepstone stepped in to squash any possibility of a coup against Labotsibeni and her son from the still unreconciled individuals who contested the throne by requesting the British and Transvaal governments to give their blessings by

³¹*Ibid.*

³²Jones, Register, p. 95.

³³Kuper, Sobhuza II, p. 26.

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recognizing the newly chosen heads of state in Swaziland. Thus Labotsibeni and Bhunu were introduced to the Swazi nation with their newly acquired titles as queen mother and the crown prince, respectively, on September 3, 1890. This was done before the end of the mourning period for the late King Mbandzeni,³⁴ and as such it was an unusual act, for in the past the new office bearers were never introduced or 'shown' to the public before the end of the mourning period.

Apart from the obvious point of disregarding the 'traditional' protocols as scholars of 'traditional' paradigm would expect the rise of Labotsibeni and her son to proceed, this skewing of 'traditional' procedures is instructive in an important way. It reveals a significant point in the history of Swazi succession to the throne: that after an heir apparent had been chosen by the royalists the final stamp of approval which usually put to an end the lingering doubts from the other unsuccessful claimants had previously came from Europeans, especially the Transvaal Boers. This had happened since the appointment of Kings Mswati II in 1861 and Mbandzeni in 1875. It happened once again in the case of Labotsibeni and her son Bhunu. The Anglo-Transvaal Joint Commission gave their acknowledgment of Labotsibeni and Bhunu as new heads of state on December 9, 1889, long before these newly appointees were publicly introduced to the Swazi nation.

Therefore, it might not be a far-fetched view to suggest that since the days of King Mswati II the critical constituency after the Swazi Inner Selection Council, which was sought or important for the final stamp of approval for an heir apparent, was neither the

³⁴Matsebula, History, p. 149.

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Swazi public nor other neighboring African states, but the Boers and to a lesser extent the British in the British colony of Natal. Thus the Transvaal Boer Commissioners boasted of being king-makers in Swaziland, a claim they made on March 26, 1894 during Bhunu's formal inauguration as king when he attained his majority. The Swazi leaders did not contradict this claim, at least on the occasion of Bhunu's installation.³⁵

Therefore, from the beginning of the formation of the Swazi state during the conquest days of King Sobhuza I (Somhlolo), the emaSwati people themselves had absolutely no say in choosing their king. This means that a king was always imposed on them by Dlamini royalists. Here then we have the foundation of a dictatorial authority of a kingship as the form of rule in the case of Swaziland. I would suggest that the practice of imposing a king over Swazi society was a contributory factor which made it possible for Europeans to exercise control in Swaziland.

In 1889 the former queen mother Tibati Madvolomafisha Nkambule was elevated to the position of queen-regent, a position she was expected to hold until Bhunu attained

³⁵Headlam, Materials, p. 2. For Transvaal Boers' part in the installation of Mbandzeni, see Booth, Swaziland, p. 12 and Genge, "Law," p. 39. For recognition of Bhunu as an heir to the throne by the Anglo-Transvaal Commission, see Annexure I, "Minutes of Proceedings of the Swaziland Joint Commission," in De Winton, "Report on Swaziland," p. 33. For the Transvaal Boer Commissioners' claim on having been traditionally involved in the installation of Swazi rulers, see Verbatim transcript of shorthand notes taken down on the spot. Meeting at Inkanini Kraal, Swaziland, March 26, 1895 (?) 1898 (?). The Miller Papers in J.S.M. Matsebula Collection, University of Swaziland. The two question marks next to these dates are further indication of the problem of dates in the recording of the historical events in Swaziland. According to other sources the Transvaal Government organized the ceremony to instal Bhunu as king on 16 March 1895, instead of 26 March. See Jones, Register, p. 95. For the Transvaal's claim of having been traditionally involved in the installation of Swazi kings, see Jones, Register, p. 97, and O'Neil, Swaziland, p. 47.

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his majority, and Labotsibeni replaced her as queen mother. As queen regent, Tibati co-ruled the country with her son Logcogco, who earned a title of being the senior prince and a regent for the male line of the monarchy.³⁶ It is Labotsibeni's victory over other competitors for the position of queen mother which merits some comments because it sheds light on the internal distribution of power and enables us to identify the power brokers in the Swazi monarchy.³⁷

First, it is significant that Labotsibeni was allowed to enter the contest for the position of queen mother in spite of the fact that she had four children. In addition, that she was not from any of the families known to have provided queen mothers in the past and that she ultimately succeeded to the position raises the issue of whether there were indeed any rigid rulers for succession. The selection of Labotsibeni as queen mother seems to suggest that Swazi laws of succession were informed by the practical realities of the time rather than being grounded in some type of a rigid 'traditional' pattern. Here, we are reminded of what other scholars have observed with regard to the practice of law and

³⁶Kuper, Sobhuza II, p. 26 and Jones, Register, pp. 109-110.

³⁷The point of whether Mbandzeni chose his successor before his death or whether his successor was chosen after his death need not be a major concern for us here, because this work does not focus on the rules of succession in Swazi politics, nor is it about the role of Mbandzeni in such a succession. For a discussion of the rules of succession in Swazi politics, see Richard Mphaya Simelane, "Some Succession Disputes Over Kingship in the History of the Swazi People from 1840-1899" (a research paper submitted to the Department of History in partial fulfillment for the Bachelor of Education Degree in the University of Swaziland, May 1985), pp. 1-62. However, Simelane's paper ought not be regarded as a definitive piece on the subject of succession in Swazi politics, because it has serious shortcomings. See also N.N. Rubin, "The Swazi Law of Succession: A Restatement," Journal of African Law, IX, 2 (Summer 1965), 90-113.

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custom in precolonial Swazi society. They have pointed out the “Swazi law and custom is [sic] above all a matter of subtle nuances and shades of emphasis, *adapted to addressing social needs as they arise*.”³⁸ Therefore, the choice of Labotsibeni and her son Bhunu must be interpreted as an indication of the adaptiveness of the thinking of the time. Swazi rulers, just like other precolonial African rulers, were not prisoners of ‘traditions,’ instead they took decisions and actions based on their analysis and understanding of the events at a given time. This point was reiterated by the late King Sobhuza II recently in this century when he launched discussions for constitutional reform in Swaziland. He is reported to have stated, “I think that it is not meant for people to say ‘because I have always followed this particular tradition, I will follow it indefinitely, even if it is misleading us.’ It is good to be able to change according to the situation and if we find something good, adapt yourself to that.”³⁹

Second, by recommending Bhunu as an heir who would “sire a true successor to Kingship,” King Mbandzeni was perhaps attempting to preempt a constitutional technicality which might have prevented Labotsibeni from being considered for the position of queen mother, because she had already had three sons, a situation which the Swazi law of succession discouraged for fear of opposition from the other son(s) who

³⁸Thandabantu Nhlapo, Marriage and Divorce in Swazi Law and Custom (Mbabane, Swaziland: Websters, 1992), p. xi. Emphasis added.

³⁹Part of King Sobhuza II's speech made at Masundwini on 23-4-1961, when he initiated constitutional discussions which followed and culminated on 6-9-1968. (Sobhuza II: Constitutional Discussions, Masundwini, 23-4-1961, in J.S.M. Matsebula Collection, Special Collection, University of Swaziland), p. 2.

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were not chosen for the position of a king. Of course, Mbandzeni's own selection to the position of a king was based partially on an understanding that he was going to sire a legitimate heir.⁴⁰ But both in Mbandzeni's and Bhunu's cases, such an arrangement was made with the object to secure to the position of queen mother a queen considered most ideal for the position. That means, rules of succession were occasionally modified to enable the selection of the most able queen mother, instead of searching for a queen who would fit into the rigid rules of succession. Furthermore, Mbandzeni's suggestion shows the extent to which the Swazi royal house was able to reconstitute itself in times of crisis relating to succession, especially when it wanted to bring to its center the most capable individuals.

Third, Labotsibeni's success in attaining the throne of queen mother also sheds light on the significance of receiving the backing of the then current queen mother which seems to have always tipped the scales in favor of the queen or the heir who has received her support. That Labotsibeni's candidacy was supported by both the then queen mother Tibati Madvolomafisha Nkambule and her son Logcogco who was a senior member of the Inner Council which selected an heir, gave it an enhanced legitimacy in the eyes of the royalists. Of course, other scholars have shown that Swazi history reflects the precedence of the decisiveness of such persons in their collective capacity as the "inner caucus of royal family and regents" with regard to the final selection of an heir in a tight contest for power among the potential heirs. They have argued that this happened after

⁴⁰For a discussion of Mbandzeni's siring an heir from the late heir apparent's (Ludvonga's) wife and the complications it led to, see Bonner, *Kings*, pp. 162-163.

the death of King Mswati in August 1865. On that occasion, there was a very tight competition for the office of kingship between prince Mbilini and a younger prince Ludvonga. As a favorite of the late King Mswati Mbilini had strong claims to becoming the next king. Mswati had in fact expressed a wish while he was dying that Mbilini succeed him to the throne for obvious reasons: Mbilini was the son of Mswati's chief wife laMakhasiso, and since he was an older contender, a twenty year old, his choice would have avoided a prolonged regency. Nevertheless, Mbilini lost the candidacy to Ludvonga.

There are numerous reasons which led to Mbilini's failure to succeed to the throne, but paramount among these were the voices of the then queen mother Tsandzile and other senior regents and councillors such as Malunge Dlamini and Sandlane Zwane, who favored Ludvonga.⁴¹ However, the discussion of Ludvonga's success does not take into account the possibility that the mothers of the male contenders for the throne could have attempted to pull the strings in favor of their sons. It is reasonable to point out that the first part of the contest for the Swazi throne after the death of a king is focused on the characters and qualifications of the mothers of the potential heirs, and not vice versa. In fact the existing scholarly analysis of how various candidates have jockeyed for power is largely male-centered in that it revolves around the personalities and claims of the male heirs with very little discussion of the position of their mothers. In the case of Labotsibeni we might then speculate that there existed some kind of lobbying, strategic positioning,

⁴¹For a fuller discussion of succession disputes after King Mswati's death in 1865, see Bonner, Kings, chapter 7.

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and jockeying for the position of queen mother among the queens themselves with those who occupied decisive positions of influence such as the queen mother, king and the most senior councillors.⁴² Presumably, Labotsibeni had done her part in canvassing for support from both Mbandzeni and from the other most influential figures. However, there is no way we could know how Labotsibeni consciously and deliberately influenced others, including King Mbandzeni, to choose her for the position of queen. And yet, we can infer from the evidence we have about how her candidacy was advanced and through the use of historical imagination, that it is very likely that she did.

Finally, that the Inner Council which chooses a queen mother scrutinized the candidacy and characters of the queens, rather than of the potential heirs, indicates the importance attached to the office of queen mother in Swazi politics. Therefore queen mothers must be seen as the foundation upon which the Swazi monarchy rests.

Like it had happened in the past, the death of King Mbandzeni in October 1889 raised a twofold question: who would succeed him as king and who would succeed the queen mother who, though still alive, was expected to vacate her position for the mother of the heir. In fact, the outgoing queen mother was usually elevated to a position of queen-regent for the duration of the minority of the heir, while both the heir and his mother were being initiated into the royal and Swazi politics in general. With regard to Labotsibeni, she did not need such an initiation for she was already a veteran in both

⁴²To my knowledge no scholarly work has been done on this point in Swazi politics, and those who are closer to the center of the Swazi monarchy might enlighten us on this point.

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kinds of politics. Thus right from the time she entered the political arena as queen mother, she compromised the Swazi law of succession, according to which she was expected to take an active part in politics as a co-ruler only later after her son had been officially installed as king, upon attaining his majority.

Upon being chosen as queen mother Labotsibeni built her headquarters at Zombodze, under the eastern slopes of the Mdzimba Mountain range, not very far from her late husband's homestead at Mbekelweni. It was from Zombodze that Labotsibeni would later conduct the affairs of the Swazi state until her retirement from active politics in 1921. The queen-regent Tibati Nkambule had her headquarters at Nkanini far away from Labotsibeni. The heir apparent Bhunu was brought to Zombodze, where he lived in separate quarters from his mother. It was here that he was secluded and ritually prepared for his future duties of kingship.⁴³

The Swazi Monarchy in a State of Flux

What was the state of the monarchy when Labotsibeni entered the political arena as queen mother? Although succession to the throne was well managed following Mbandzeni's death in October 1889, he left behind a weak and politically shaky monarchy. The Anglo-Transvaal alliance was closing in on Swazi independence - this was symbolized by the Anglo-Transvaal Joint Commission under F. De Winton, which visited Swaziland shortly after Mbandzeni's death, from November 30 to December 19,

⁴³Jones, Register, pp. 400 and 96.

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1889. The "White Committee" which was established in 1887 to administer the affairs of the European concessionaires had collapsed in 1889. In the same year, just before he died Mbandzeni had dismissed Theophilus Shepstone, Jr. from his position as the Resident Agent and Advisor to the Swazi Nation. After Mbandzeni's death, however, Shepstone had been reinstated as Resident Agent and Advisor, but Shepstone's actions were becoming suspect to some members of the royal house.

Therefore, Labotsibeni's task was multifaceted as she made sure that her son was firmly seated on the throne. In the turbulent royal politics of the time this usually meant formal seclusion, ritual king-making and the protection of the heir apparent from a possibility of being killed by the still unreconciled losers for the throne.⁴⁴ She also had to deal with the European factor in Swazi politics involving the Anglo-Transvaal alliance which was beginning to make inroads into the affairs of the country, concessionaires, and Shepstone's controversial role. However, before she could address any of these tasks,

⁴⁴Here we might recall the mysterious circumstances surrounding the death of an heir apparent Ludvonga on March 18, 1874 before he was officially installed as king of Swaziland. He was then succeeded by Labotsibeni's late husband Mbandzeni in 1875. For a discussion of this, see Bonner, *Kings*, pp.123-125. More recently the Queen-Regent Dzeliwe and her clique were alleged to have sent someone to 'bewitch' the Crown Prince Makhosetive, i.e., the current King Mswati III, while he was still in seclusion in England. A remark is made in this document which has no name of its author, that "what is suspicious [sic] and heinous is that according to custom a Crown Prince is exclusively handled by the Shiba clan." See a one page document titled, "Inkosikati Dzeliwe sent witch-doctor to Crown Prince Makhosative surreptitiously," 8th September 1983 (Matsebula Papers). For ritualization of a king, see Kuper, *Aristocracy*, chapter VI. The ritual medicines for the king were supervised only by the Shiba clan. To this Kuper has this to say, "The Shiba claim to have practised the ceremony for the Dlamini from the days at the first national home, Eshiselweni. The leading *inyanga* is the head of the lineage, but he is assisted, as is usual in national ritual, by other members of his family, who will teach his heir." Kuper, *Aristocracy*, p. 79.

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Labotsibeni had to deal with her newfound situation of being expected to remain subordinate to the queen-regent Tibati for the duration of the minority of her son Bhunu. This also meant that she was expected to be inactive in politics for awhile. However, contrary to such a 'traditional' view, Labotsibeni continued to be actively involved in the affairs of the country. Whatever power tension might have been there between her and the queen-regent, these two figures seemed to have understood the basic point about royal politics that palace protocol ⁴⁵ takes precedent over any individual differences they might have had. They cooperated well, until Tibati's death on 14 October 1895, when even they were challenging what they perceived a foreign interference in the affairs of the monarchy. This idea of maintaining family unity when dealing with countervailing positions was earlier expressed by an already ill King Mbandzeni to the then queen mother Tibati Nkambule at a meeting with the Swazi nation in August 1889 when they had differed on the issue of concessions. Mbandzeni is reported to have sent a message to Nkambule that "he didn't want a dispute to come between them as they were of the

⁴⁵Recently Noem Bream has in an unacademic but informative fashion explored the manner in which palace protocol rules a king. He used the current Swazi King Mswati III to illustrate his argument. See Noel Bream, "Prisoner of Protocol: King Mswati may rule Swaziland but make no mistake, palace protocol rules the king," *Pace Magazine* (October 1991), pp. 146-149. University of Swaziland Library has a copy of this article. For a scholarly view on how the palace protocol rules the king, or to put it differently on how power holders in a monarchical setting work together to preserve the sacredness of the institution, as discussed elsewhere in Africa, see Simon Simonse, Kings of Disaster: Dualism, Centralism and the Scapegoat King in Southeastern Sudan (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992). For minor differences and more cooperation between queen mother Labotsibeni and queen regent Tibati, see Jones, Register, pp. 457-458. Nyeko, for his part, seems to have overstated the differences between these two figures. See Nyeko, "Leadership's Response," pp. 60-65, and Nyeko, "Pre-Nationalist Resistance," pp. 10-12.

United States

Department of State

Office of the Secretary

Washington, D.C.

The Secretary

March 1994

Subject: [illegible]

Reference: [illegible]

Enclosure: [illegible]

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Information: [illegible]

For the Director

Secretary of State

Washington, D.C.

Enclosure: [illegible]

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political institution, the incumbents of the Swazi monarchy had occasionally held divergent views among themselves, they never lost sight of the important element of the institution, i.e., the maintenance of its sacredness and unity of its corporate polity. Here then we find a partial explanation of the longevity of the monarchy.

The challenges which faced the Swazi monarchy and Labotsibeni in particular from the 1890s onward were fundamentally different from any issues which had confronted them before. The monarchy was increasingly becoming dominated by the then recently reinstated Resident Agent and Advisor of the Swazi Nation, Theophilus Shepstone Jr., especially in its dealing with Europeans both in Swaziland and outside. The Anglo-Transvaal Joint Commission which enquired into the state of affairs in Swaziland in December 1889 had instituted a Provisional Government Committee to replace the defunct "White Committee" and to administer the affairs of the Europeans in the country until the Anglo-Transvaal governments resolved what they perceived the 'Swaziland Question.' Other scholars have understood the so-called 'Swaziland Question' to be whether or not, from a British perspective, "would Britain let the Transvaal take over Swaziland and have access to the Indian Ocean through Tongaland?"⁴⁷ But the so-called 'Swaziland Question,' also had another much significant dimension to it. In light of the economic interests of both British and Transvaal (Boer) subjects in Swaziland, and the Anglo-Transvaal guarantees for their maintenance of Swazi independence as undertaken in the Pretoria and London Conventions of 1881 and 1884, respectively, the

⁴⁷Hugh Macmillan, "From Mswati II to Sobhuza II: The Swazi Nation from 1865-1899" (unpublished paper, Social Science Research Unit, University of Swaziland, n.d.), p.18.

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point for consideration was which power would be allowed finally to colonize Swaziland and "how [was] the government of the country to be carried on?"⁴⁸ This point is evident in the main reason for the sending of the Anglo-Transvaal Joint Commission, that of inquiring "into alleged conflicting interests in Swaziland, arising out of the *rapid development of foreign enterprise* in the country, due to the discovery of gold in 1885 and 1886, and the *absence of an established European system of Government*."⁴⁹ It is important to emphasize this latter point as having been the core of the so-called 'Swaziland Question' from the perspective of the Transvaal government rather than Swaziland's strategic position en route to the sea (Delagoa Bay), for the Transvaal and British governments were determined to create a European-style government in Swaziland to preside over their interests. A focus on internal developments in Swaziland reflects the economic value of Swaziland to the British and the Boers alike. The emphasis on Swaziland's strategic position relative to the Indian Ocean has its origins from Noel Garson's thesis which in general has minimized the significance of internal

⁴⁸De Winton, "Report on Swaziland," p. 14.

⁴⁹Letter, Sir Henry B. Loch, Governor and High Commissioner, South Africa, Cape Town, to Lord Knutsford, Colonial Secretary, Colonial Office, August 13, 1890. "A Convention Between Her Majesty and the South African Republic for the Settlement of the Affairs of Swaziland with Correspondence Relating Thereto," in Command Paper 6217 (London: HMSO, 1890), p. 14. Emphasis added. This document was presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of Her Majesty on November 1890. For another official view of the so-called "Swaziland Question" from the British perspective, see a document, "The Swaziland Question," African (South) No. 438, Printed for the use of the Colonial Office, CO879/37.

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events in Swaziland.⁵⁰

The Provisional Government Committee consisted of Shepstone as its Chairperson and a representative of the Swazi interests; Colonel Sir Richard Edward Rowely Martin, a representative of the British Government, and Daniel Johannes Esselen who represented the Transvaal Government.⁵¹ The Provincial Government Committee had its headquarters at Bremersdorp (present-day Manzini). Shepstone claims that the Swazi rulers had approved the establishment of Bremersdorp as the seat of the Committee.⁵² Of course, whether the Swazi rulers had consented or not on the choice of Bremersdorp as the seat of the Government Committee is a moot point given Shepstone's record of twisting information. Even if the Swazi rulers did not consent, it is very doubtful that the seat would have been created anywhere else. Therefore, Shepstone here might be unnecessarily clothing the Swazi rulers with authority they did not have or had no ability to enforce. But what is important for our purpose here is that this new seat of

⁵⁰See Noel George Garson, "The Swaziland Question and A Road to the Sea, 1887-1895" (M.A. Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand), in Archives Year Book for South African History, Vol II (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1957).

⁵¹For the work of the Anglo-Transvaal Commission and its creation of the Provincial Government Committee, see Colonel Sir F. De Winton, "South Africa: Report on Swaziland," in Enclosure No. 3, Command Paper No. 6201 (London: HMSO, 1890), pp. 7-18. In the context of the British politics the subject of this Report was significant, for the Report was presented to both Houses of British Parliament in August 1890.

⁵²See letter, Theophilus Shepstone, Resident Advisor and Agent of the Swazi Nation, Embekelweni, Swaziland, to D.J. Esselen, Commissioner, South African Republic, Bremersdorp, 22 August 1892. File No. S. 27, Swaziland National Archives (hereafter SNA).

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Government Committee was to emerge as the base of a European power which was to grow to challenge the Swazi power at Mbekelweni. Furthermore, that this Committee chose to establish its power base away from the Swazi monarchy was an indication that it always intended to develop independently of the influence and control of the Swazi power.

In the historiography of Swaziland this Provisional Government Committee is misleadingly referred to as the "Triumvirate Government," or the "Tripartite Government."⁵³ This is indeed a gross misunderstanding of the position and influence of the Swazi monarchy as presented by Shepstone in this Committee. The Swazi monarchy had absolutely no power in the Committee, for it could neither reverse nor ignore the decisions of this body, especially decisions pertaining to the Anglo-Transvaal interests in Swaziland. For example, in 1890 during the preparation for the proceedings of the Concessions Court in Swaziland, Shepstone requested his colleagues in the Committee "whether the Swazi could draw up a list of concessions of which they disapproved, rather than an approved list." The British representative Martin supported Shepstone's idea, but the Transvaal representative Esselen opposed it. When Shepstone's suggestion was taken to the Transvaal State Secretary W.J. Leyds, and the British High Commissioner Henry Loch for final decision, Leyds opposed it and Loch agreed with Leyds.⁵⁴ Hence,

⁵³See Matsebula, History, p.153, and Hamilton Sipho Simelane, "Swazi Resistance to Boer Penetration and Domination, 1881-1898," Transafrican Journal of History, Vol. 18 (1989), 128.

⁵⁴For all the information on Shepstone's request and the final Anglo-Transvaal on it, see Garson, "Swaziland Question, p. 350.

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Shepstone's suggestion failed. Likewise, the fact that Shepstone, in his capacity as a representative of the Swazi monarchy, was co-opted to the proceedings of the Anglo-Transvaal Joint Commission in December 1889 does not mean that the monarchy had any power in this Commission. Therefore, instead of perceiving the Swazi monarchy as having power in the Provisional Government Committee, I suggest the presence of its representative Shepstone in this body obscured the monarchy's loss of a major political voice to the Anglo-Transvaal in the affairs of the country. And at its best, such a representation was an Anglo-Transvaal attempt to justify their rule in Swaziland. Once we recognize this point, we begin to realize that from this juncture onward Swazi monarchy had in fact cooperated with an institution which was bent on colonizing Swaziland. Such a cooperation might have been one of the reasons that the use of military power by Britain and the Transvaal governments was not necessary in their colonization of Swaziland, but it did not stop these powers from colonizing the country.

The significance of these developments, for our purposes, is that they introduced to Swaziland for the first a political instrument which directly represented the interests of the British and Transvaal governments in Swaziland, and it was an instrument which was accountable only to these governments. Here then was a fundamental departure in power relations from the previous arrangements when the 'White Committee' was answerable to the Swazi king. Therefore, the Provincial Government Committee which was created in December 1889 only four months after the death of Mbandzeni must be understood as the first official step by the Anglo-Transvaal governments to institute a political entity in Swaziland to look after the economic interests of their respective subjects. This is an

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example of the flag following economic interests of the business community in the era of European colonization of Africa.⁵⁵ The European business community in Swaziland had, on its own, dismally failed to institute a functional political authority. This failure was manifested in the collapse of the 'White Committee' in 1889, which was intended to administer European affairs, though the 'Committee' was accountable to the Swazi monarchy. Commenting on the lack of administrative political skills of the 'Committee', Francis De Winton observed that the minutes of the proceedings of its meeting indicated the 'Committee' attempts at administration. However, De Winton noted that with:

no experience in administration, and nearly all having private interests in the country, the record of these minutes are a *painful evidence of internal dissensions, contained differences, and an absence of any desire to contribute to the real welfare of the country*. Latterly the country was left to govern itself, as the members were engaged in *getting concessions for themselves and their friends*.⁵⁶

In their attempts to secure concessions, the concessionaires had competed for the attention of either King Mbandzeni or any other influential persons in the monarchy, such as chief councillor Tikhuba Magongo, who is known for his involvement in granting concessions of all kinds. Some of the concessionaires like John Thornburn even followed Mbandzeni to his death-bed for concessions.⁵⁷ With the competition for the attention of

⁵⁵There is vast literature on this point. But, for a most recent work on this point in southern Africa, see Richard A. Voeltz, "The European Economic and Political Penetration of South West Africa, 1884-1892," International Journal of African Historical Studies, 17, 4 (1984), 623-639. For a discussion of a connection between trade and politics in a country that has close historical parallel with Swaziland, see Eric Flint, "Trade and Politics in Barotseland During the Kololo Period," IAH, XI, 1 (1970), 71-86.

⁵⁶De Winton, "Report on Swaziland," p. 10. Emphasis added.

⁵⁷Bulpin provides a good discussion of the concession spree during King Mbandzeni's last

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the Swazi authorities, there is no wonder that the members of the 'White Committee' became disinterested in both the Committee's affairs and the welfare of the country. In their eyes, the country was up for grabs, economically speaking. And presumably they had reasoned that political authority would follow the economic power, and indeed the Anglo-Transvaal governments' creation of the Provincial Government Committee did just that. Therefore, this logic and what had happened in Swaziland are instructive with regard to the processes by which European colonization expanded to Africa and to other areas. It was at this moment, at the death of Mbandzeni in August 1889, that Labotsibeni was just entering the political realm in her own right as the Queen Mother.

Although the Anglo-Transvaal Joint Commission had still to report their findings and make recommendations about the future of Swaziland to their respective governments, De Winton had in his mind already placed Swaziland within the British Imperial context by the time the Commission instituted the Provincial Government Committee. For example, he informed the British representative Colonel Martin that he would arrange with the British government for his salary to come from the Imperial funds. He added that, "the sum so paid [i.e., Martin's salary from Imperial funds] being afterwards recoverable from the Swaziland revenue when that revenue is properly collected and the Government of Swaziland is in possession of the necessary funds." The Transvaal representative was likewise to be paid the same amount as Martin by its

few days and hours before his death. See T.V. Bulpin, Storm Over the Transvaal (Cape Town: Standard Press, 1955), pp. 149-150. For Tikhuba Magongo's involvement in granting concessions, see Jones, Register, pp. 375-376.

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government.⁵⁸ These arrangements are a further indication that the Anglo-Transvaal governments were now becoming actively involved in shaping the affairs in Swaziland. Gone were the days of uncoordinated business activities and adventurous endeavors by Europeans. And indeed, the Anglo-Transvaal Joint Commission had realized that some European adventurers were acting as they pleased in Swaziland and without any regard to matters of law and order. For example, the Commission was informed through an affidavit made to Shepstone that Charles Elisha King "had taken an ox, burnt a kraal and its contents, and taken away a [Swazi] girl of between seven and nine years."⁵⁹ King had demanded money for the girl's ransom. The Commission authorized Shepstone to summon King and his accomplice James Henry (Jemuse) Howe and to bring the abducted child before it under its newly and temporarily constituted authority as a Court of Justice on December 12, 1889. But, King was found not guilty and Howe was fined £35.⁶⁰ De Winton expressed satisfaction about this trial when he wrote, "this trial had a good effect on both Whites and natives."⁶¹ This trial was a harbinger of the manner in which the

⁵⁸For all this information regarding Martin, see letter, Sir F. De Winton to Colonel Martin, Dauke's Hotel (presumably in Swaziland), December 19, 1889, Enclosure in No.167, "Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Swaziland and Tongaland," in Command Paper No. 6200 (London: HMSO, 1890), pp. 242-243. De Winton had sent a copy of this letter to Governor and High Commissioner Sir Henry B. Loch, see letter, Sir F. De Winton to Sir H. Loch, Lake Chrissie, S.A.R., December 24, 1889, in *ibid.*, p. 242.

⁵⁹See Annexure I of the Minutes of Proceedings of the Swaziland Joint Commission, Fifth Meeting at Embekelweni, 11th December 1889, in De Winton, "Report on Swaziland," p. 36.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, and Jones, Register, pp. 283 and 321.

⁶¹De Winton, "Report on Swaziland," p. 12. For a discussion of 'killing off' as denoting

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Anglo-Transvaal administration was to rein in the illegitimate but seemingly long-standing practices of local European residents.

That Swaziland was perceived as an area of adventure by some Europeans is also revealed in another incidents when a Boer woman warned her son Owen Rowe O'Neil just before his visit to the country with his uncle Tuys Grobler from the Eastern Transvaal. "My son," the woman said, "you must not follow Oom [uncle] Tuys too closely. He is wild and sometimes as bad as King Buno [sic] himself. *You will see many things that we Boers would not permit here*, and you must not take these things too much to heart. Remember that you are an O'Neil, and take good care of yourself!"⁶² Grobler was in the habit of bringing liquor and gifts, including guns at one time, to Bhunu and Labotsibeni, and eventually in April 1899 took Bhunu on a trip to Pretoria to meet President Paul Kruger.⁶³ Bhunu, for his part, had become too attached to such monthly gifts or 'payments' or 'tributes' as Grobler refers to them. For example, Grobler told his nephew that "lately, however, he [Bhunu] has objected to so much gold and wants more gin. Buno [sic] says he can only look at the gold, but he can drink gin." Evidently in a self-congratulatory mood, Grobler told his nephew O'Neil that Bhunu was his friend "and Oom Paul depends upon me to keep him satisfied and prevent him from making war on

confiscation and banishment, see chapterabove.

⁶²O'Neil quotes his mother's words as were spoken to him. O'Neil, Swaziland, p. 45. Emphasis added. This work captures well the spirit of Boer adventurism in Swaziland.

⁶³O'Neil, Swaziland, pp. 45-47 and 53-54. For Bhunu's visit to Pretoria, see also Matsebula, History, p. 167.

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our people....[And] I am the one who brings it [payment in gold and gin] to him."⁶⁴ And Grobler knew that as a rule, the British and Boer governments in southern African had prohibited the sale of firearms to Africans, but nevertheless, he violated such a rule in his dealings with Bhunu. He told his nephew, "Buno has asked me a thousand times to bring him a rifle," he said, "but always I have refused. As you know, the Swazis, like other kaffirs [Africans as they were derogatory referred to by Europeans], are not allowed to have guns. Death is the punishment we deal out to those who sell rifles to these savages."⁶⁵ Here we can note in passing that scholars of South African history have long observed that gun power was one of the main factors to Europeans' predominance over Africans. Thus the prohibition of sale of guns to Africans was intended to maintain the European predominance over Africans, an important dimension in power relations. Grobler's activities in Swaziland demonstrate that the forces of corruption and illicit dealings, even from the royal house itself, which faced Labotsibeni were formidable. ⁶⁶

As long as the British and Transvaal governments were not directly involved in their subjects' affairs in Swaziland, until December 1889, the Swazi monarchy enjoyed a monopoly of political power in the country. But the creation of the Provincial Government Committee in December 1889 marked the beginning of an end to such a monopoly on political power and an introduction of colonial politics in which 'race' was

⁶⁴For both quotations, see O'Neil, *Swaziland*, p. 46. O'Neil quotes his uncle's words as were spoken to him.

⁶⁵Grobler's words spoken to O'Neil. O'Neil, *Swaziland*, p. 53.

⁶⁶See for example, Shula Marks, "Review Article: African and Afrikaner History," *JAH*,

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an important factor: the Swazi monarchy was to deal with 'purely' Swazi affairs, whereas the 'Committee' was responsible for European affairs, as if such affairs could be neatly separated. However, by February 1890 De Winton had noted in his report that the British government ought to consider "the abandonment by the Swazie nation of the practice of killing off."⁶⁷ This was an indication that the Swazi monarchy was not going to be allowed to deal independently with what was regarded as 'purely' Swazi affairs. Hence, with this statement De Winton had foreshadowed the issue of whose word would be supreme in the emerging power relations between the Swazi monarchy and the European authority in Swaziland. The Anglo-Transvaal Joint Commission in Swaziland left Shepstone in a much stronger position than before, for they had appointed him to head the Provisional Government Committee and as representative of the Swazi interests in the Committee. The latter position placed him in a critical position to influence events in the country, particularly that his European counterparts in the Committee would rely solely on him on information pertaining to the Swazi monarchy. Maybe it was the realization of this point which led De Winton to note in his report that, "as regards the independence of the nation, much depends on the tact and prudence of Mr. T. Shepstone."⁶⁸ Indeed Shepstone did take unilateral actions which compromised or misrepresented the position of the monarchy against the Anglo-Transvaal alliance. For example, by August 1890 the

XI, 3 (1970), 445.

⁶⁷De Winton, "Report on Swaziland," p. 12. As noted previously, the practice of 'killing off' refers to punishment in the form of confiscation and / or banishment.

⁶⁸De Winton, "Report on Swaziland," p. 12.

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Transvaal representative in the Committee Esselen expressed to the Transvaal State Secretary Leyds his mistrust of Shepstone's ability to genuinely represent the Swazi interests. Esselen wrote, "I am sure that in by far the majority of cases in which he says: 'the Swazi nation wants this or that', he does so to further his own interests. He has far too much power under the [Organic] proclamation of 18th December 1889. In my opinion, this power should be curtailed as far as possible."⁶⁹ Whether indeed by as early as this Shepstone had exercised deliberate deception by misrepresenting the interests of the Swazi leaders in the Committee or whether Esselen was indirectly expressing frustrations arising from Shepstone's opposition to some of his ideas, is hard to tell. But later Shepstone proved Esselen's view correct pertaining to his misrepresentation of Swazi interests to the Committee.

From 1890 to 1894, during Labotsibeni's first years in power, the Swazi rulers experienced the erosion of their jurisdiction from what used to be their conventional domains and the growing influence of Anglo-Transvaal power in the country. These developments culminated in the Anglo-Transvaal governments' imposition of Transvaal 'protectorate' status on Swaziland without the latter being annexed to the Transvaal Republic. The Anglo-Transvaal governments employed a series of politico-legal instruments such as the establishment of the Concessions Court in Swaziland in 1890 and the signing of Conventions in their attempts to bring about the subordination of the Swazi monarchy under a European power. In their sum, these events have received scholarly

⁶⁹Quoted in Garson, "Swaziland Question," p. 352.

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attention,⁷⁰ and I do not intend to discuss them here. Instead, I will only explore briefly the incidents which are pertinent to the theme of this work: power relations.

Some of the major events which shaped power relations in Swaziland lay beyond the ability of Labotsibeni and the Swazi monarchy to influence and control, for such events had their origins outside the country. The major three events were the Anglo-Transvaal Convention of 1890, the Convention of 1894 and the 1898 Protocol to the Convention of 1894. I now turn to briefly discuss the manner in which each of these events affected power relations in Swaziland.

It is important to bear in mind the type of a Boer government in the South African Republic which was competing with the British for a colonial slice in Swaziland, as we examine the Anglo-Transvaal attempts to impose their colonialism on Swaziland.⁷¹ In spite of their apparent cooperation in the affairs of Swaziland the Transvaal Boer and the British governments had significant differences with regard to their views of the place of Swaziland in their different colonial adventures. They never resolved these differences of colonial outlook toward Swaziland until they went to war against each other from October 1899 to May 1902 over issues emanating from the Transvaal Republic. By the 1890s neither of these powers enjoyed a monopoly of power in southern Africa. The Transvaal Boers were landlocked in their mainland South African Republic. The British

⁷⁰See, for example, Simelane, "Swazi Resistance," *Transafrican Journal of History*, 18 (1989), 117-146; Matsebula, *History*, pp. 154-162; Booth, *Swaziland*, p.16 and Genge, "Law," chapter 3.

⁷¹For a discussion of this point, see chapter Four above.

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had their hold in the Cape and Natal colonies, both coastline colonies. The Germans were establishing themselves as a colonial power in South West Africa (present-day Namibia),⁷² and the Portuguese had long controlled south-east coast of Africa in Lourenço Marques (Maputo) and Delagoa Bay. In addition, by the late 1880s when these powers committed themselves to preserving Swazi 'independence', the British had already developed a sophisticated machinery to deal with colonial affairs, namely the Colonial Office. However, the Transvaal Boer government lacked such a machinery, and thus its State President Paul Kruger tended to be directly involved with the British Colonial Officials in the affairs of Swaziland. Consequently, the Swazi leaders had a first hand knowledge of the Boer leaders and the latter's government machinery was relatively knowable to the Swazi monarchy, for it was not wrapped up mystical powers.

In contrast to the easily observable Transvaal Boer government by the Swazi leaders, the British machinery of government was, as a general rule, shrouded in mystery, especially with regard to the way its decision making procedures were conveyed to the colonies by its officials. One scholar has pointed out that the British administrators in British Africa talked of the British monarchy in religious or mythical terms. The speeches of the British administrators "presented to African audiences a king who was almost divine; omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent."⁷³ For example, when talking

⁷²For a discussion of Germans in South West Africa, see Voeltz, "European Economic," International Journal of African Historical Studies, 17, 4 (1984), 623-639.

⁷³Terence Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., The Invention of Tradition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1st publ. 1983, reprinted 1994), pp. 230-231. On the 'mystique' and 'prestige' of a

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with the BaSotho in British colonial Lesotho such administrators “stressed the royal knowledge of their situation, the royal concern for their well-being and the royal responsibility for decisions which in reality had been taken by the cabinet.”⁷⁴ Such a portrayal of the king had other unintended consequences from the Swazi queen leaders, namely that they perceived colonial administrators in Swaziland as ordinary employees of a British king and queen. Consequently, these Swazi leaders developed an inclination to send their communications through their deputations directly to the British king or queen when they disagreed with or suspected that the local administrator would not respond favorable to their message. For example, the Swazi deputation sent by Labotsibeni to England in November 1907, which was just one of many her deputations, expressed the Swazi leaders’ doubts that the British king had approved actions by British officials in Swaziland. The deputation informed the British king of their doubts and appealed for his sympathy as follows, “OUR countrymen find it difficult to believe that Your Majesty has authorised or is likely to authorise a policy which spells the confiscation of their homes and all their rights and interests as well as the revenues of King and Government and the annihilation of the national life and political independence of the Swazi people.”⁷⁵

British colonial state in Africa, see also Bruce Berman, Control & Crisis in Colonial Kenya: The Dialectic of Domination (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1990), pp. 202-208.

⁷⁴Ranger, “Invention,” in Hobsbawm and Ranger, eds., Invention, p. 231. For a discussion of this mystification of the British king in British colonial Africa, see *ibid.*, pp. 229-236.

⁷⁵Swazi Deputation to His Majesty the King at Buckingham Palace, 25 November 1907 (File No.: D45/07/640, SNA). Youé quotes the same statement, but from a different source. See C.P. Youé, “Imperial Land Policy in Swaziland and the African Response,” Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, VII, 1 (October 1978), 61.

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The Anglo-Transvaal governments signed a Convention of 1890 which among other things established the basis for the British and Transvaal Boers' cooperation in their imposition of colonial rule in Swaziland. In fact, the Transvaal government was browbeaten by Sir Henry B. Loch, Governor and British High Commissioner for South Africa, into signing this Convention a document which he had drafted. The Transvaal government signed it with an understanding that the Convention was only a stop-gap measure prior to a more permanent arrangement.⁷⁶ The Convention made provisions for the introduction of a European-style state bureaucracy in Swaziland.

This Convention not only extended the life of the Provisional Government Committee from the initial four months period beginning from December 18, 1889, to an indefinite period, it also introduced fundamental innovations which affected power relations in Swaziland. Article 1 stated, "The independence of the Swazis, as recognized by the Convention of London of 1884, is affirmed, and no inroad on that independence shall be allowed, *even with the consent of the Swazi Government, without the consent of both Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the South African Republic.*"⁷⁷ Although this clause purports to preserve Swazi independence, it clearly took away the independence of action from the Swazi leaders when it denied to them any consensual

⁷⁶See letter, Sir Henry B. Loch, Cape Town, to Lord Knutsford, Colonial Office, August 13, 1890, attached to "Convention of 1890," pp. 14-16. See also "Resolution of Volksraad" (Transvaal Government) to Loch, Enclosure in No. 30, in *ibid.*, pp.16-17.

⁷⁷"Convention of 1890," p. 4. Emphasis added. (Hereafter I will refer to this document as Convention of 1890.) This document was presented to both Houses of the British Parliament on November 1890.

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role in deciding which power they would develop ties with. In fact, rather than protecting the independence of the emaSwati this clause ought to be interpreted as preserving Swaziland for the Anglo-Transvaal economic interests which had been established in the country during the concessionary era. In other words, this clause held the emaSwati as hostages, so to speak, while the British and Transvaal governments were still working on a permanent arrangement for the management of the economic interests of their subjects in Swaziland. For example, Article 2, clause (b) of the Convention made provision for the British and the Transvaal governments to jointly nominate a Secretary and Treasurer for the Provisional Government Committee. Such an officer was expected to provide periodic reports on the affairs of Swaziland to both the High Commissioner and the Transvaal State President.⁷⁸ Therefore, even at this point the view that Swaziland was still not colonized or was an independent country ought not to be taken at its face value.

The Convention made provision for the establishment of a Chief Court in Swaziland. The Court was to be staffed with one or three judicial official(s) upon the decision of the High Commissioner and the President of the Transvaal. Article 2, clause (g) laid the foundation of the European-style law for Swaziland when it stipulated, "the laws to be administered by all Courts of Justice to be the Roman-Dutch Law as in force in South Africa, but subject to such alterations, additions, or amendments as may be made by Proclamation of the Government Committee of any laws..." only with the joint approval of the British and Transvaal governments. Article 2 clause (g) further stated that

⁷⁸***Ibid.***

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the British High Commissioner for South Africa and the Transvaal State President were the final authorities regarding the making of laws in Swaziland, and without their joint approval, "no law, rule or regulation shall be proclaimed by the Government Committee, or if proclaimed be binding; provided that laws enacted during the period of power of the provisional Government Committee shall continue in force until altered, amended or repealed by some law, rule or regulation proclaimed after approval as aforesaid."⁷⁹

Article 4 stipulated that "in all the Courts of Justice in Swaziland, and in all official communications of the Government Committee, the English and Dutch languages shall have equal rights."⁸⁰ The jurisdiction of the Chief Court was described as follows:

Such Court to have full power and jurisdiction over all persons of European birth or extraction in Swaziland and over all questions, matters, and things in which any such persons are concerned, with full power to decree against all persons execution by all forms of legal or equitable procedure, approved by Her Majesty's High Commissioner and the State President of the South African Republic, of every order, judgment, decree or sentence made by it in the exercise of its jurisdiction.⁸¹

This point of reference for the Chief Court completely ignores the authority of the Swazi monarchy in the affairs of Swaziland, while at the same time it introduced into the affairs of Swaziland a colonial legal system which had been prevalent in other British colonies in Africa, i.e., a separate set of body of laws for European colonizers and for the colonized. The recognition of only English and Dutch languages as official languages of formal correspondence with complete silence on the status of the isiSwati language

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, p. 7.

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resonates with the arrangement in the British colony of the Cape in South Africa, where English and Dutch were on an equal footing and at the same time African languages and others were completely disregarded. Therefore, from the British Cape Colony scenario, I can safely infer that the 1890 Convention provided a blueprint for the making of the colonial order in Swaziland by means of the colonial legal system. The Anglo-Transvaal disregard of the Swazi rulers' opinions or voices as pertaining to the formulation of the new legal system is also typical of the making of the colonial order in most colonial situations.

Among others the Chief Court was immediately charged with the duty to adjudicate the validity of the contested concessions. In proposing the establishment of the Chief Court, the designers of the Convention had followed closely De Winton's suggestion for a creation of a Concessions' Court to deal with conflict arising out of the concessions among the Europeans. Indeed, the Chief Court of Swaziland reconstituted itself as the Concessions Court from October 1890 to January 1891. Here I do not intend to discuss the work of the Concessions Court, for I had done that elsewhere.⁸² Suffice to say that such a court clearly brought home to the Swazi monarchy the idea that it had lost not only its authority to define and interpret the ownership of its economic resources, but also any semblance of power over Europeans in Swaziland. Therefore, the Chief Court represented a visible symbol of the growing European power in Swaziland.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁸²See Genge, "Law," 78-82. For De Winton's recommendation for the establishment of the Concessions Court in Swaziland, see his "Report on Swaziland," p. 17.

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In a more general sense, the Anglo-Transvaal governments' creation of the Chief Court in Swaziland must be understood as an affirmation of these powers' predominant position in the affairs of the country, for whoever possesses legal power indirectly rules a country. It has long been observed by scholars of law in Africa that law is one of the central instruments which shape and refashion a society, for "it is the means through which changes of sentiment or structure are introduced into a society."⁸³ Therefore, in the case of Swaziland with the advent of the Chief Court which was completely controlled by the British and Transvaal governments, the Swazi monarchy had lost any ability to make social changes in the country. It also lost any guarantee of property rights, a right usually upheld by a state through its state apparatus such as courts of law, the police and armed forces.⁸⁴ This guarantee was now taken over by the Provisional Government Committee which executed it through the Chief Court.

Even worse than that, the Convention pushed the Swazi rulers to the periphery of the country in administrative terms by confining their legal power to matters which the British and the Transvaal governments regarded as 'exclusively native' in nature. Article 2, clause (i) stipulated that, "...no powers or jurisdiction to be claimed or exercised by the Government Committee, or any judicial tribunal in respect of any question, matter, or

⁸³ Antony Allott, "Law in the New Africa," African Affairs, 66, 262 (January 1967), p. 5.

⁸⁴For discussion of this point, see Robin Murray, "The Internationalization of Capital and the Nation State," in Yash Ghai, Robin Luckham and Francis Snyder, eds. The Political Economy of Law: A Third World Reader (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp.289-301.

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thing in which Swazi native alone are concerned."⁸⁵ This provision was reinforced by

Article 6 which stated that:

the control and management by the Swazi Government of all affairs in which natives only are concerned shall remain unaffected by such organic Proclamation...and shall be regulated according to native laws and customs, save in so far as by such laws and customs any danger may arise affecting good and orderly government under the provisions of the organic Proclamation..."⁸⁶

Here we have the genesis of what was to emerge as the 'native policy' in Swaziland, a policy which both the British and the Transvaal Boers had developed in their other colonial adventures in South Africa.⁸⁷ However, Article 2 clause (i), and Article 6 did not crush the power of the Swazi leaders over the emaSwati. The Swazi leaders retained their earlier privileged position of dominance over the emaSwati. And they continued to be regarded as spokespersons for the emaSwati.

Apparently as a diplomatic gesture as well as an attempt to make the terms of the Convention palatable to the Transvaal government, the British approved the former's suggestion of ceding to the Transvaal a piece of territory known as the Little Free State

⁸⁵"Convention of 1890," p. 6.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁸⁷See for example, Benjamin Kline, Genesis of Apartheid: British African Policy in the Colony of Natal, 1845-1893 (New York: University Press of America, 1988); Edgar H. Brookes, White Rule in South Africa, 1830-1910: Varieties in Government Policies Affecting Africans (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1974); David Welsh, The Roots of Segregation: Native Policy in Colonial Natal, 1845-1910 (London: Oxford University Press, 1st publ. 1971, and reprinted 1973); Ifor L. Evans, Native Policy in Southern Africa: An Outline (London: Cambridge University Press, 1934); J.A.I. Agar-Hamilton, The Native Policy of the Voortrekkers: An essay in the history of the interior of South Africa, 1836-1858 (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1928), and Edgar H. Brookes, The History of Native Policy in South Africa From 1830 to the Present Day (Cape Town:

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from Swaziland. This place had been given to some Boer families by King Mbandzeni in 1875 in return for their services in guarding the boundary line against infiltration by his half-brother Mbilini and his followers, who were then fugitives in Zululand. Now, the Boer population in the area had increased to about four hundred and the population was described as poor and lacking administrative infrastructure and other social services.⁸⁸

Perhaps in anticipation of a negative Swazi leaders' response to the terms of this Convention, and probably as a demonstration of force, an important aspect in power relations, the British and the Transvaal included a provision which authorized the Provincial Government to use force on the emaSwati, if necessary, for the implementation of this document. Article 3 stipulated that:

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^{88a} "Convention of 1890," Article 24, p.13, and see also W.J. Leyds, *The Transvaal Surrounded: A Continuation of "The First Annexation of the Transvaal"* (London: T. Fisher UNWIN, 1919), p. 307. For the history of the Little Free State, see letter, Sir A. Havelock, Natal Governor, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, to Sir Hercules Robinson, Governor and British High Commissioner, March 22, 1889, Enclosure in No. 81, in Command Paper No. 6200, p.133; G.M. Rudolph, Resident Magistrate, Eshowe, Natal, to Gerald Brown, Secretary for Zululand, Pietermaritzburg, March 16, 1889, in *ibid.*, pp. 134-135, and Headlam, ed., Materials, p. 8. It might be of interest to scholars of the history of Swaziland to observe that the idea of incorporating Swaziland with the South African Republic was already in the minds of some of the British officials as far back as March 1889. See letter, Havelock to Robinson, March 22, 1889, Enclosure in No. 81, in Command Paper No. 6200, p. 133. This idea has so far been examined by scholars as far as it crystalized in early twentieth-century Swaziland. See for example, David E. Torrance, "Britain, South Africa, and the High Commission Territories: An Old Controversy Revisited," Historical Journal, 41, 3 (1998), 751-772; Balam Nyeko, "The African Voice in Colonial Swaziland: The Question of Transfer, 1910-39," Mhlomi: Journal of Southern African Historical Studies (September 1981), pp. 20-44, and Alan R. Booth, Lord Selborne and the British Protectorates, 1908-1910," Journal of African History, X, 1 (1969), 133-148.

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Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the South African Republic mutually guarantee that they will enforce the due observance by the Swazi Government and the Swazis of the provisions of the organic Proclamation aforesaid, and of good and orderly government established thereunder, but no steps shall be taken, and no act be done, by either Government to compel such due observance by force without the approval of the other, which approval shall be deemed to be given if no objection to any such step or act shall be communicated to the Government giving notice of intention to take such a step or do such act within two weeks from the date of such notice; provided that either of the said Governments may, upon application by the aforesaid Government Committee, interfere by force in any urgent case to compel such due observance as aforesaid; and provided that, in case of such interference being applied for, the other Government may act upon such application.⁸⁹

This provision left the Swazi leaders with no choice but to comply with the terms of the Convention, and any failure to do so would have resulted in an Anglo-Transvaal military action against them. The Swazi military would not have been a serious match against an Anglo-Transvaal force, although Swazi military power was estimated to be about 8,000 to 10,000 troops by the end of 1889. However, their weaponry was largely made up of assegais and knobkerries,⁹⁰ rendering Swazi forces especially weak relative to a combination of well-armed Anglo-Transvaal forces. Given the long history of the Swazi rulers' collaboration with and dependence on these powers for the conduct of their domestic and foreign affairs, it would have been suicidal for them not to comply with the new arrangements. Of equal significance was that by authorizing military use Article 3 made mockery of Article 1 of this Convention in which the Anglo-Transvaal reaffirmed the independence of Swaziland, and of Article 2 which required the consent of the Swazi

⁸⁹"Convention of 1890," pp. 6-7.

⁹⁰The Swazi military size and its armaments was reported by De Winton, see his "Report on Swaziland," p. 8.

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government, i.e., the Queen Regent and the Council through an Organic Proclamation to give legitimacy to the 1890 Convention.

In September 1890 Theophilus Shepstone Jr. had issued the Organic Proclamation on behalf of the Queen Regent Tibati Nkambule and the young King Bhunu to endorse the 1890 Convention. He did this without the knowledge or consent of these two key individuals.⁹¹ Significantly, this means that the Swazi leaders did not see the actual document of the 1890 Convention. Queen Regent Tibati was the designated head of state and she was expected to sign or approved all state official correspondence or any activity during the minority of King Bhunu. As I will discuss below, Shepstone later lost his position as the Resident Agent and Advisor of the Swazi Nation, partly due to his issuing the Organic Proclamation in violation of the terms of reference for his work.

I have given considerable space to the analysis of the terms of the Convention of 1890 in order to highlight few points about the imposition of European colonization in general and their place in the historiography of Swaziland. The terms of the Convention provide us with the theoretical underpinnings of the European powers at the planning stage of their colonial adventure. They open for us a window from which to observe the manner in which European colonization was planned exclusively by European powers. They reveal both the way in which diplomatic bargaining and browbeating were

⁹¹Copy of a letter, Queen Regent, her Councillors and Labotsibeni, Inkanini Kraal, to Colonel Martin, British Resident, Swaziland, August 28, 1894, in File No. S. 4, Subject: "Dismissal of Mr. T. Shepstone from the Office of Resident Advisor to the Swazi Nation and Appointment of Mr. G.H. Hullet as Chief Secretary, Swaziland National Archives, hereafter SNA.

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conducted behind closed doors of European powers. By observing such diplomatic maneuvering, we are able to identify the owner of the master plan for colonial adventures, and in the case of the document I have just analyzed, the British were its masters. Therefore, the 1890 Convention was a hidden transcript of the Anglo-Transvaal alliance against the Swazi state, for the latter did not know of or approved the content of the Convention. There is no evidence which shows that the Swazi leaders were aware of the existence of such a document.

Scholars of the history of Swaziland, especially that aspect of history which touches on the period of the 1890s either give a scant attention to the 1890 Convention or ignore it. For example, J.S.M. Matsebula discusses it in a space of one and a quarter page, Alan R. Booth has two sentences on it, so as Christian P. Potholm and Hamilton Siphosimelane, and Jonathan Crush simply ignores the Convention altogether. An exception here is Noel George Garson, who provides a detailed analysis of the 1890 Convention. However, he examines the terms of the Convention as they relate to strategic position of Swaziland as a potential route for the Transvaal to the Delagoa Bay. He explores its significance in the Anglo-Transvaal rivalry with particular relevance to this sea route.⁹² What is more, none of these scholars, except Garson, have actually used the document which has the terms of the Convention, instead they commented upon it via secondary sources. The bulk of the literature on the history of Swaziland seems to assume that

⁹²Matsebula, *History*, pp. 148-149; Booth, *Swaziland*, p. 16, Potholm, *Swaziland*, pp. 11-12, Simelane, "Resistance," 129, and Crush, *Struggle*. For Garson's discussion, see Garson, "Swaziland Question," chapter III.

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colonialism started in 1902 with the introduction of British colonial administration in Swaziland. For example, Balam Nyeko considers the period from 1899 to 1902 as time when Swaziland was on the eve of colonial rule and whereas according to M.H.Y. Kaniki, Swaziland became colonized in 1903.⁹³ Therefore, the issues of when Swaziland actual became colonized by Europeans, and what type of colonization ensued, still remain elusive in the historiography of Swaziland. Professor M.H.Y. Kaniki died recently when he had just undertaken a project to examine the nature of colonialism in Swaziland.⁹⁴ For my part, I suggest that the basis of colonialism as far as the structures of a colonial state were concerned ought to be traced to the 1890 Convention. And for our immediate purpose, the understanding of power relations in colonial Swaziland, I have shown here that the Convention of 1890 was a crucial instrument in shaping Anglo-Boer-Swazi relations in Swaziland. In almost all the subsequent Conventions the Anglo-Transvaal governments took the 1890 Convention as their point of departure when refining their thoughts on the nature of colonialism in Swaziland and the place of the Swazi rulers within it.

In 1893 Britain and the Transvaal signed another Convention regarding their rivalry over Swaziland. Here I am not concerned with the details of this Convention, for

⁹³Nyeko, "Swazi Leadership," pp. 69-72, and M.H.Y. Kaniki, "The Swazi Monarchy and the Dynamics of Colonialism" (Paper presented at the History Research Seminar, University of Swaziland, 22 January 1997), p. 2. Of course, numerous works on the colonial history of Swaziland take it for granted that European colonialism began in the early 20th century.

⁹⁴For his preliminary findings, see Kaniki, "Colonialism," pp. 1-50.

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it has minimal relevance to the subject at hand. The British High Commissioner had complicated the proceedings of this Convention by introducing matters which had no direct bearing on the so-called 'Swaziland Question.'⁹⁵ A noteworthy point about the Anglo-Transvaal Convention of 1893 is these governments' attempts to persuade the Swazi leaders to sign the Organic Proclamation as an indication of the latter's acceptance of the conditions of the Convention, which among others included a provision for the Transvaal to administer Swaziland. For a two-year period, 1893 and 1894, the Swazi leaders would not budge from their steadfast refusal to sign a consent to the Convention. They argued that, "the Queen Regent was unable to sign any document by which her country should be governed by the Boers."⁹⁶ Shepstone and Esselen singled out Queen Mother Labotsibeni as the main person who influenced the entire Swazi monarchy against acknowledging Boer overrule in Swaziland. Esselen even reasoned that Labotsibeni refused to sign the proclamation, because doing so would have been tantamount to "signing away her own and Bunu's future power."⁹⁷ Esselen's observation touches on another important aspect of colonialism, i.e., the power to control the colonized. Therefore, Labotsibeni not only contested the mere idea of being ruled by the Transvaal Boers, but she, like any precolonial leader in Africa was concerned about preserving the Swazi throne for herself and her son, for their entry into it had already

⁹⁵For a discussion of the 1893 Convention, see Garson, "Swaziland Question," chapter IV, and Leyds, Transvaal Surrounded, chapter XLII.

⁹⁶Quoted in Garson, "Swaziland Question," p. 359.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 358.

been approved when they were nominated as heads of state following the death of King Mbandzeni toward the end of 1889. If Labotsibeni was indeed the main force behind the Swazi leaders' refusal to give their consent to the establishment of the Transvaal Boer rule in Swaziland, she finally succeeded in persuading the whole leadership to accept her stance. For instance, by September 1894 Labotsibeni and Tibati had been so united in their stance against the 1893 Convention that Shepstone referred to them as "the royal family party," which was committed to put up a fight against a Boer rule in Swaziland.⁹⁸ Indeed these Swazi women leaders had specific concerns about the harshness of the Boer rule. Their deputation to England which was interviewed in Natal by H.C. Shepstone, brother of Theophilus Off Shepstone Jr., on its way to England in May 1894 is reported by him (H.C. Shepstone) as having in essence stated, "...they spoke of their certain knowledge, gained by experience, of the hard and unjust treatment accorded to all natives by the Boers, and stated that they would not of their own free will place themselves in their power."⁹⁹ On this point the Swazi leaders had perhaps a good point, but they might as well have added that what distinguished the Transvaal Boer colonial rule from say that of the British, whose representative was also in Swaziland by this time, was its tendency to destroy precolonial African institutions,¹⁰⁰ whereas the British were known to preserve such institutions, especially the ones which offered the least resistance to their colonial

⁹⁸Shepstone's labeling of the queen mother and queen regent quoted in Garson, "Swaziland Question," p. 358.

⁹⁹Quoted in Garson, "Swaziland Question," p. 359.

¹⁰⁰For the Transvaal Boers' treatment of Africans in the Transvaal, see Agar-Hamilton,

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rule. Queen Regent Tibati's view provides further evidence of these Swazi women leaders' perception of the Boers. In articulating her reasons for opposing the establishment of Transvaal Boer administration in Swaziland, Tibati is reported to have said:

We refuse to accept the Government of the South African Republic, and shall not go to the Boers. If Boers were to come into Swaziland, they would build houses and lay off farms and *never admit to being considered beneath us*. They will domineer over us; will compel our subjects all over the country to go and work on their farms, even grey-headed men will have to leave their homes for this purpose, and also women and children.¹⁰¹

Here we note Tibati's emphasis on power relations. The Queen Regent revealed self-consciousness of the Swazi monarchy's privileged position as the final authority in Swaziland and did not want any inroads into that position. This signifies the importance attached by these women to the supremacy of the political power of the Swazi monarchy. Tibati's distaste of the Boer administration is further shown in her resolve never to allow herself to be subjected to such an administration. On her continual refusal to sign the Organic Proclamation for the Swazi consent to Boer administration, she is reported to have told the Boer officials on 19th February 1894 that, "if the Queen [the British Queen] says we must go to the Boers, and if our country is actually handed over to the Boers, I will kill myself. You see this reim here (reim produced), well I will strangle and kill myself with that."¹⁰² Of course, Tibati was merely expressing her utter dislike of Boer

Native Policy.

¹⁰¹Quoted in Simelane, "Swazi Resistance," 130. Emphasis added.

¹⁰²Quoted in *ibid*.

colonial rule, but did not literally mean that she would commit suicide should the Boer rule be established in Swaziland. For example, she did not strangle herself when the Transvaal government rule was established in Swaziland in early 1895. Nevertheless, she and Labotsibeni did indeed register their resistance against the establishment of the Transvaal Boer administration in Swaziland, though did not stop it from being implemented.¹⁰³ This was indeed, a tug of war between the Swazi queens and the Anglo-Transvaal governments who were attempting to coopt the Swazi leaders into a scheme intended to bring about an implementation of Boer colonial rule to Swaziland.

But ironically, although these women seemed determined to protect their power from being encroached upon by the Transvaal authority, they were more predisposed to accepting British power. For example, a British representative Martin told Loch in February 1892 that the Swazi leaders had trust in the Committee because of his presence as a British representative, and thus they were against a purely Boer administration.¹⁰⁴ Assuming that by this statement Martin was not engaged in a self-serving exercise, then the Swazi leaders had indeed not recovered from what one scholar has recently observed as the effect of the earlier so-called 'paper conquest' of the Swazi through concessions by Europeans which "left the Swazi with somewhat unrealistic impression of the whites,

¹⁰³ But in this work I am not concerned merely with the Swazi resistance to Boer administration in Swaziland, for this has been told elsewhere. See Simelane, "Swazi Resistance," 117-146.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Garson, "Swaziland Question," p. 359.

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especially the British whom they considered to be 'civilized' compared to the Boers."¹⁰⁵

Such an impression lingered on in the minds of the Swazi leaders until early in the twentieth- century when the British took over the colonial rule from the Transvaal government. Soon, however, the Swazi leaders were to complain of harsh British treatment.¹⁰⁶

After the Anglo-Transvaal governments had failed to obtain Swazi consent for the establishment of the Transvaal 'protectorate' administration in Swaziland. Then these governments signed another Convention in 1894 which got rid of a provision for Britain and Transvaal to get Swazi consent with regard to the establishment of Transvaal rule in Swaziland. This Convention became effective on December 1894.

Summary

In this chapter I have examined the rise of Labotsibeni to the position of queen mother. I have demonstrated that her rise to that position was due mainly to her acumen.

I have discussed the state of flux for the Swazi monarchy when Labotsibeni became queen mother. Her rise to power coincided with the Anglo-Transvaal governments' taking a stance toward establishing a European-style government in Swaziland. In the next chapter I discuss the manner in which Queen Regent Tibati and Queen Mother Labotsibeni tried to hold their ground against the Anglo-Transvaal colonial advance.

¹⁰⁵Kaniki, "Colonialism," pp. 2-3. For a discussion of the notion of 'paper conquest,' see Kuper, *Aristocracy*, and for my discussion of such a concept as it pertains to this work, see chapter 4 above.

¹⁰⁶See chapter 7 below for a discussion of this point.

Chapter Six

"NOT OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL": SWAZI ATTEMPTS TO HOLD THEIR GROUND

In general colonialism has never been voluntarily accepted by the colonized people. Instead, it has always been an imposed system. Even in situations like Swaziland where scholars emphasize the point that Swazi leaders requested to be placed under a British 'protectorate' system, I find myself compelled to ask the question: why did the Swazi monarchy ask for such a system of foreign rule and how was it implemented? What I found after a closer reading of evidence is that the Swazi leaders vehemently challenged the imposition of colonial rule on their country. Even the notion that Swazi leaders requested British 'protection' is fraught with ambiguities which could be resolved by an original research on this topic, instead of relying on secondary sources for the validity of such a notion.

In this chapter I examine the manner in which the Swazi women leaders contested the imposition of colonialism. I also explore the diminution of the Swazi monarch to the status of a 'paramount chieftaincy.' I argue that such diminution was a significant measure of the creation of colonial rule in Swaziland. This development also indicates that European colonialism in Swaziland had not been fundamentally different from other situations in British colonial Africa. I conclude by showing that it is a historical myth to view Bhunu, from 1895-1899, as having been a 'King' of Swaziland. Instead, I argue that he was a 'paramount chief' like other such individuals in British colonial Africa.

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Dismissal of Theophilus Shepstone and his Replacement

The Swazi queens' long standing refusal to give official sanction to the establishment of Transvaal government's colonial rule in Swaziland eventually undermined Shepstone's credibility in the eyes of the emaSwati. Once Swazi leaders became aware of Shepstone's signing of the Organic Proclamation to the 1890 Convention without their consent it transformed their view of Shepstone. Shepstone's era in Swazi politics came to an end on August 28, 1894 when the Swazi monarchy, spearheaded by Queen Regent Tibati and Queen Mother Labotsibeni, dismissed him from his official position as the Resident Advisor and Agent of the Swazi Nation.

The monarchy blamed Shepstone for many wrong and unauthorized acts which the Swazi leaders claimed he had done without their knowledge. Among the accusations leveled against him by the Swazi leaders issued in the name of Queen Regent herself were the following:

- (1) The issuing of the Organic Proclamation in the name of the young King Ungwane [sic] (a minor) dated September 1890 without the Young King or Queen Regent having signed the same and without their knowledge or consent.
- (2) The framing of a List of Concessions alleged to have been granted by the late King Umbandeni [sic] and declaring the same as approved by the Swazi Govt. He did this without the knowledge, consent or approval of the Queen regent & her Councillors.
- (3) Mr Theophilus Shepstone has wilfully [sic] misrepresented the Swazi Nation's wishes with respect to the suggested occupation by the South African Republic [Transvaal] and directly opposed & suppressed by all his means in his power any expression of opinion on our part when we desired to make ourselves heard on this matter and his actions have convinced us that he has been acting in the interest of the SAR [Transvaal] instead of our interest.¹

¹Copy of a letter from Queen Regent Tibati, Enkanini Kraal, Swaziland, to Col. Martin, British Resident, Swaziland, August 28, 1894. Attached to this letter is Queen Mother Labotsibeni's endorsement of Shepstone's dismissal, dated August 29, 1894. File No. S.

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That Shepstone was accused of such actions probably did not come as a big surprise to the Swazi queens, for King Mbandzeni had at some point dismissed him in 1889 before his (Mbandzeni) death. He had then been reinstated after Mbandzeni's death. Indeed, Shepstone and Tikhuba Magongo, one of the most senior Swazi councilors, were involved in sinister work with regard to concessions. For example, he had requested Martin, British Commissioner in Swaziland, on April 27, 1894, "not to mention [to the Queen Regent Tibati] the approved 'List of Concession' which were drawn up in 1890, as he [told Martin that] Tikuba [sic] feared, if [Martin] did so, his life would be in danger."² Further Shepstone and Tikhuba had placed "the power of attorney to collect the King's private revenue, and the Concession for the collection of licences" on a supplementary list, which was signed by them only without interpreting it to the Queen Regent.³ The importance of these allegations to our story is that they confirm the validity of the accusations.

However, the most significant issue regarding Shepstone's dismissal is the way it

4; Subject heading: "Dismissal of Mr. T. Shepstone from the office of Resident Advisor to the Swazi Nation and Appointment of Mr. G.H. Hullet as Chief Secretary," SNA. For a list of concessions which the Swazi rulers alleged that Shepstone had compiled without their knowledge, see appendix of this dissertation for a list attached to a letter, Theophilus Shepstone, Resident Advisor and Agent, Swazi Nation, to Colonel Martin, the British Commissioner, Swaziland (No. 87/93), July 20, 1893 (CO879/38).

²Confidential letter, Colonel R.E.R. Martin, British Commissioner, Swaziland, to the British High Commissioner, Cape Town, April 29, 1894 (Enclosure in No. 178, CO879/38).

³*Ibid.*

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revealed the complex nature of power relations in Swaziland. The Swazi queens used their authority to replace Shepstone with George Herbert Hulett, Solicitor of the Supreme Court, Natal, as Chief Secretary for the Swazi Nation on the same day that they fired Shepstone, i.e., August 28, 1894. Edmund Howard Langston, Solicitor of the Supreme Court, Natal, and an associate of Hulett, was appointed as a deputy Secretary of Hulett. They abolished the office of the Resident Advisor and Agent to the Swazi Nation.⁴ These were the most well-informed appointments of European secretaries any Swazi leaders had ever made in the history of Swaziland up to this point, as will be seen below in the manner in which these two lawyers, as secretaries, handled the affairs of the monarchy.

Labotsibeni seized the moment of Shepstone's expulsion to reassert herself firmly again at the center stage of Swazi politics. Before the final date of Shepstone's dismissal on 27 April 1894 at a meeting at Enkanini which was attended by the Queen Regent, Swazi Councillors, Shepstone, the British Commissioner Col. Martin, the Transvaal Commissioner and others, Labotsibeni demanded that Shepstone produce all the documents pertaining to the concessions in order that those in attendance of the meeting

⁴For the appointments of Hulett and Langston, see a letter, Tibati, Queen Regent, Enkanini Kraal, to George Herbert Hulett, Solicitor, Supreme Court of Natal, Swaziland, September 3, 1894 (File No. S. 4, SNA). (Letters of appointment were endorsed by Labotsibeni.) Labotsibeni's endorsement was attached to this same letter and signed on September 3, 1894. See also a letter with Labotsibeni's endorsement from Tibati, Enkanini, to Col. Martin, British Resident, Swaziland, September 29, 1894 (S. 4). See also Jones, Register, p. 285, for Hulett, and pp. 337-338, for Langston, and for Hulett, see also Matsebula, History, p. 149. For the dismissal of Shepstone and the closure of the office of the Resident Advisor and Agent to the Swazi Nation, see a letter, George H. Hulett, Chief Secretary's Office, Zomboti, to Stoffel Tosen, Transvaal Commissioner, Swaziland, September 4, 1894 (S. 4). See also two Proclamations issued in the name of King Bhunu and Labotsibeni, 21 February 1895 (S. 4).

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could check who were the signatories and witnesses in such documents. Shepstone responded by stating that he had not brought concession documents to the meeting. Thereafter, Labotsibeni is reported to have told Shepstone not to "go home and sit up all night with a candle amending or altering the concessions."⁵ She even told the gathering that she intended to go herself to England to lay the complaint against Shepstone. Labotsibeni concluded her scorning of Shepstone by telling her audience that "there will be no difficulty about raising the necessary funds, for Mr. Shepstone has in his charge a vast portion of Mbandeni's [sic] inheritance."⁶

The British officials, for their part, took seriously Labotsibeni's threat of herself going to England with the Swazi deputation. After Labotsibeni had made her statement W.G. Cameron, the High Commissioner, sent a telegraph to the Marquis of Ripon, Colonial Office, in which he suggested that arrangements for the Swazi deputation to England be made soon. He expressed doubts that the Queen Regent would join the deputation, but assured Ripon that Labotsibeni might seriously consider joining the

⁵"Translation of a Conversation that took place, in the Swazie Language, before the Queen Regent and Council, in the presence of the British Commissioner, South African Republic Commissioner, and others, on the 27th April 1895, at Nkanini Kraal," attached to a confidential letter from R.E.R. Martin, Colonel, to His Excellency the High Commissioner, April 29, 1894 (Enclosure in No. 178, CO879/38).

⁶*Ibid.* For further views against Shepstone by the Swazi queens, especially the Queen Regent Tibati, see "Interview between Colonel Martin and the Swazie Queen Regent at Enkanini Kraal on Saturday, September 1st, 1894" (CO879/38). At this meeting the Queen Regent had, among others, told her audience that "you White people do not hear what we have to say. You work on one line and we work on another." This shows not only a miscommunication in colonial situation, but also different agendas which were pursued by a colonizing power and by those who were resisting colonialism.

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deputation.⁷ Ripon informed Cameron that the Swazi deputation should pass through the office of the High Commissioner in Cape Town on its way to England and that the Transvaal government should be informed of all the developments between the Swazi deputation and the High Commissioner in Cape Town. He further expressed the hope that Cameron might be able to persuade the Swazi deputation to sign the Organic Proclamation to the 1893 Convention.⁸ Swazi deputation of which Labotsibeni was not one of its members left for England on October 1894.⁹

We can make a few observations on the Cameron's and Ripon's reactions to Labotsibeni's threat of going to England to complain against Shepstone's conduct in Swaziland. First, that these officials took Labotsibeni's statement in its literal sense reveals their limited knowledge of the way Swazi queen mothers and queen regents exercised their power in the affairs of Swaziland. No Swazi queen mother or queen regent had ever undertaken a trip outside Swaziland for state-related matters. This had always been the responsibility of a king, but not a queen mother or a queen regent. Her threat had been rhetorical, and clearly it was effective. Had the British officials understood this point, they would not have been so concerned about Labotsibeni's threat

⁷Telegraphic message, Cameron to Ripon, Received on May 26, 1894 (CO879/38, Entry No. 8980, Enclosure No. 176).

⁸Telegraphic message, Ripon to Cameron, Sent on May 28, 1894 (CO879/38, Entry No. 8980, Enclosure No. 179).

⁹For the names of Swazi deputation, see letter, Queen Regent Tibati with Labotsibeni's approval, Enkanini Kraal, to Col. Martin, British Resident, Swaziland, September 29th, 1894. For a discussion of how this deputation handled its mission in England, see Matsebula, *History*, pp. 156-158.

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of going to England herself. Second, it is clear that the Colonial Office was concerned with the Swazi queens' refusal to consent to the establishment of Transvaal Boer colonial rule in Swaziland, and Ripon was still hopeful that the Swazi leaders could be persuaded to give such a consent which was crucial for providing legitimacy to the Transvaal colonial rule. Finally, Ripon did not want it to appear to the Transvaal government that they were being left out in talks between the British government and the Swazi leaders, for such a view had the potential to undermine the unity of purpose which these powers had been attempting to forge on Swaziland. Thus he informed Cameron to keep the Transvaal government informed of any developments between the Swazi deputation and the British High Commissioner at Cape Town. Here it must be recalled that earlier on August 21, 1893, Ripon had telegraphed the then British High Commissioner in South Africa Sir Henry B. Loch to inform him that "...Her Majesty's Government are most anxious to avoid all possibility of future misunderstanding, and to deal in the most frank and friendly spirit with the Government of the South African Republic..."¹⁰ on the affairs of Swaziland.

After he was expelled Shepstone refused to hand over to the Swazi leaders books and papers or any correspondences regarding concessions which had been kept by him in his capacity as the Resident Advisor and Agent to the Swazi Nation. Martin, had on his part, restrained the Swazi from using force to compel Shepstone to hand over any concession documents in his custody. Indeed, the Swazi did not use force. But the

¹⁰Telegraph, Ripon to Loch, 21st August 1893 (Entry 745 S. No. 28, CO879/38).

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absence of force and of an independent strong Swazi legal institution whose authority enjoyed the respect of Shepstone and the officials of the British and Transvaal governments in Swaziland only enabled Shepstone to defy the Swazi authority. Stoffel Tosen, the new Transvaal Commissioner in Swaziland applied for a court order from the High Court which was established by the governments of Britain and the Transvaal to stop the Swazi leaders from obtaining concession documents from Shepstone. The Court issued an interdict against the Swazi leaders on a flimsy reason, claiming that they would destroy such documents.¹¹

The replacement of Shepstone with the lawyers Hulett and Langston as Secretaries for the Swazi Nation, created the threat for Martin that the Swazi might now discover the real intentions of the British officials' agenda in Swaziland, and perhaps with the new legal vigor of these lawyers the already uncompromising stance of the Swazi queens against the colonial order might be further reinforced. For example, immediately after the appointment of these secretaries by the Swazi queens Martin responded to their appointment in a way designed to undermine their effectiveness. He initially refused to recognize the appointment of Hulett and Langston. He informed the Queen Regent that he would "destroy any letter" written to him by Hulett in his capacity as the Secretary for the Swazi Nation. He also informed the Queen Regent that he did not want to meet with the Swazi leaders in the presence of any European person brought by them, and this evidently was a reference to Hulett and Langston. However, Martin always brought with

¹¹Letter, Langston to Martin, September 12, 1894 (File No. S. 4, SNA), and letter, Langston to Martin, September 15, 1894 (in *ibid*).

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him other Europeans to such meetings.¹² Apparently Martin was concerned that Hulett's and Langston's legal knowledge, experience in Natal, and their knowledge of the British system of government both in the mother country and the colonies would be used by the Swazi to decode the British intentions in Swaziland and to oppose the imposition of colonial rule.

Martin's fears were realized. For example, on September 15, 1894, E. Howard Langston wrote a letter on behalf of the Swazi nation to Martin in which he challenged the legality of the Anglo-Transvaal governments' High Court in Swaziland which had issued an interdict stopping the Swazi from getting their concession documents from Shepstone. In this letter, Langston based his protest against the High Court on the grounds that the Court had "no jurisdiction in matters relating to the Swazis themselves."¹³ In the same letter, Langston informed Martin of the illegality of the Organic Proclamation of September 13th, 1890, which was signed by Shepstone without the consent of the Swazi. To drive the point home to Martin that he knew what was and was not acceptable to the British government in England, Langston wrote, "I feel sure that the British Government on these [High Court's interferences on affairs 'pure' Swazi] facts

¹²Letter from E. Howard Langston, Acting Chief Secretary for the Swazi Nation, Swaziland, to Col. Martin, British Resident, Swaziland, September 12, 1894 (File No. S. 4, SNA). For Martin's refusal to recognize Hulett's appointment, see also a letter, Langston to Martin, September 20th, 1894 (in *ibid*).

¹³Letter, Langston to Martin, September 15, 1894 (File No. S. 4, SNA). See also letter, Langston to Martin, October 6th, 1894 (in *ibid*).

being known to them will see that the High Court has no right to interfere in the matter."¹⁴

Langston sent copies of some of his correspondences with Martin directly to Ripon, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to other officials in the Colonial Office and to the High Commissioner in Cape Town. In one of such correspondences was the letter in which Langston protested both against Shepstone's continued receipt of concession moneys from concessionaires after his dismissal by the Swazi, and against what he perceived as Martin's intervention in favor of Shepstone against the Swazi.¹⁵ "It is my duty" Langston wrote to Martin, "to warn your Honour that the Swazi Nation hold the British Govt. responsible for all or any consequences that may arise or losses they may suffer by reason of your intervention in favor of Mr. Shepstone and in, as it appears, supporting him in withholding from them their moneys, books and papers."¹⁶ He concluded his letter by expressing Swazi leaders' unhappiness about the treatment they received from Martin regarding Shepstone's recalcitrant and defiant attitude against them.¹⁷

Of course, Swazi leaders had called a meeting of European residents in Swaziland to inform them of the dismissal of Shepstone as the Resident Advisor and Agent of the Swazi Nation and the mess he was causing in the country. At this meeting George Herbert Hulett and Edmund Howard Langston were introduced as having taken over from

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵Letter, Langston to Martin, September 20th, 1894 (S. 4, SNA).

¹⁶*Ibid.*

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Shepstone.¹⁸ Most of the European residents at this were evidently British, for they told the Swazi leaders that they hoped "England might govern the country."¹⁹

More significantly for our discussion of the making of the colonial order in Swaziland, is Martin's statement to the Queen Regent that he would "destroy" any written communication to him from the Swazi queens written by Hulett. This reveals the extent to which British officials on the spot in the colonies were prepared to destroy any evidence regarding protests against their actions by local people. With officials such as Martin on the ground, then historians ought not to rely completely and exclusively on documents generated by colonial administrators when they reconstruct the history of European colonialism in Africa and other parts of the world. These documents must be augmented with oral evidence or documents generated by the colonized peoples, should such documents exist.

In their respective capacities as Chief Secretary and Acting Secretary Hulett and Langston had caused a stir in Swazi-Anglo-Boer relations in Swaziland. They apparently proved to be a threat to the Anglo-Boer hidden transcript as it pertained to

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸For the proceedings of this meeting, see notes on its, "Meeting at Enkanini," September 10, 1894 (File No. S. 4, SNA). See also a notification of the meeting to European residents on behalf of the Queen Regent written by George H. Hulett, Chief Secretary, M'Dimba, Swaziland, August 30th, 1894 (S. 4), and a note written by James Stuart, Interpreter of the British Commissioner in Swaziland, September 14, 1894, to be added to Meeting of 10 September 1894, between the Queen Regent and European residents (S. 4).

¹⁹James Stuart, Interpreter for the British Commissioner, his note of September 14, 1894, "To be added to Meeting of 10th Sept. 1894, between the Queen Regent and certain Europeans" (S. 4, SNA).

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these powers' dealings with the Swazi leaders. As early as August 1, 1894, George H. Hulett wrote a letter to Martin in which he complained of Swaziland police surveillance at his residence at Mdzimba, Swaziland. He told him that for days Shepstone had sent men to watch him, but he disregarded these men, for he taught it was just Shepstone's method of indirectly getting information about him. However, now that he was "being watched by orders from the combined Government [Anglo-Transvaal],"²⁰ Hulett expressed his concern to Martin. Howard Langston had like Hulett, experienced a threat against his life. On October 25, 1894, Langston wrote a letter of protest to Martin and sent its copy to the British High Commissioner, Cape Town, South Africa. He specifically complained of two Swazi men armed with guns who were found "lurking" about his residence at Mdzimba at about eight p.m. at night. These men reported that they had been sent by Shepstone from what used to be his 'police'. Langston also complained of the similar incidents of men "lurking" at nights at the Swazi queens' residences at Enkanini (Tibati) and at Zombodze (Labotsibeni). He complained of a possible British resident's (Martin) support of Shepstone in these sinister actions. He asked Martin to stop such occurrences for the sake of peace and order in the country.²¹

Apparently Martin had briefed the High Commissioner in Cape Town, of Langston's activities in Swaziland long before Langston had sent the above correspondence to Martin and the High Commissioner. On October 13, 1894, the High

²⁰Letter, George H. Hulett, to Martin, August 1, 1894 (S. 4).

²¹Letter, Langston, Acting Chief Secretary, to Martin, October 25th, 1894 (S. 4). Langston sent a copy of this letter to the British High Commissioner, Cape Town.

Commissioner had sent a message by telegraph to Martin regarding Langston. The High Commissioner wrote, "I think you might give Mr. Langston fair warning that if he continues his present line of conduct and if in your opinion his conduct should be dangerous to the peace of the country it will become your duty to apply for special authority to take such measures as you consider necessary for the general safety."²² This indicates that the High Commissioner approved of and was willing to authorize extreme measures of intimidation to curb their activities.

Hulett's and Langston's tenure as Secretaries of the Swazi queens enhanced the latter's understanding of the Anglo-Transvaal governments' agenda in Swaziland. By so doing Hulett and Langston became threats to the emerging order of the colonial state in the country. Their contribution to the Swazi queens' fight against the establishment of Transvaal Boer colonialism ought to be distinguished from the earlier sinister work of Shepstone in his capacity of Resident Advisor and Agent of the Swazi Nation. They had, unlike Shepstone, advanced Swazi leaders' challenge to the colonial order. It is significant to emphasize this point, because the contribution made by Hulett and Langston to the history of Swazi resistance to colonial rule is important. They assisted the Swazi queens to understand and contextualize better both Shepstone and the Anglo-Transvaal governments' agenda. Hulett encouraged the Swazi queens to refuse to accept the Organic Proclamation of the 1890 Anglo-Transvaal Convention which was signed by Shepstone and then forced on them by the British and Transvaal officials in Swaziland.

²²Telegraph from High Commissioner to Col. Martin, Bremersdorp, Swaziland, October 13, 1894 (S. 4).

Instead, he advised the Swazi leaders to seek British protection and to send a deputation to London against Shepstone's activities and the Organic Proclamation of 1890 Convention.²³ In recognition of his contribution the Swazi queens appointed him as a member of the first Swazi deputation to London in 1894.²⁴ However, the British government declined to recognize Hulett's official capacity as part of the Swazi delegation. Hulett never returned to Swaziland with the Swazi deputation from England.²⁵ Langston, for his part, played an important role as the Acting Chief Secretary for the Swazi during the absence of Hulett. He represented the Swazi interests in numerous correspondences to the British Commissioner in Swaziland. He left Swaziland in March 1895 on a business mission for the Swazi King Bhunu to England and left behind T.B. Rathbone as a temporary Acting Secretary until either his or Hulett's return.²⁶ Like Hulett, Langston never returned to Swaziland from his trip to England. However, he continued to represent Swazi interests to the Colonial Office in his capacity as the Chief Secretary of the Swazi Nation and Representative. It was here in London where Langston is reported to have presented the Swazi case "in eloquent terms for the continuing independence of the Nation, since it had not been a party to the third

²³Jones, Register, p. 285.

²⁴See letter, Queen Regent Tibati, with Queen Mother Labotsibeni's approval, Enkanini, to Col. Martin, British Resident, Swaziland, September 29th, 1894 (S. 4, SNA).

²⁵Jones, Register, p. 338.

²⁶Letter, Langston, to Martin, February 28, 1895 (S. 4, SNA). T.B. Rathbone was one of the European concessionaires who were residents in Swaziland.

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Swaziland Convention which the South African Republic and the British government"²⁷ imposed the Transvaal administration in Swaziland. While still in London Langston further urged the Swazi not to recognize the Transvaal administration.²⁸ By so doing, he fueled Swazi defiance of Boer rule.

Notwithstanding all the activities discussed above with regard to the services of Hulett and Langston to Swazi rulers, Hulett and Langston are completely ignored by historians of Swazi history, especially those who have dealt with Swazi resistance to Boer colonialism and the Swazi use of foreign advisors.²⁹ By so doing, these scholars have missed an important aspect in power relations during the phase of the making of the colonial order in Swaziland: on the ground Swazi leaders' relations with Europeans in general were not rigidly separated as had been the case in other colonial situations. Swazi leaders had enlisted the services of Europeans in their dealings with Europeans since 1887 with Theophilus Shepstone Jr., and in their protest against the imposition of colonial rule. To overlook the services of such Europeans such as Hulett and Langston, in strengthening the Swazi course, is to tell half the story. And to view all such

²⁷Jones, Register, p. 338.

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹See for example, Simelane, "Swazi Resistance," 117-146, and B.H.L. Nyeko, "The Influence of Foreign Advisers and Educated Africans Upon the Swazi Rulers in the Early Colonial Period" (unpublished paper, located in Special Collection, University of Swaziland Library, n.d.), 1-27. J.S.M. Matsebula, for his part, only mentions that, "George Hulett sailed on the same ship [with the Swazi deputation], but the British did not recognize him as a member of the deputation. He did, however, act as a witness and was one of the signatories to the written request presented by the deputation to Queen Victoria." See Matsebula, History, p.157. Matsebula is silent on Langston's activities.

Europeans as having worked against the Swazi interests, is to look at the history of European colonialism from the perspective of its later phase, where racial separation³⁰ was a *fait accompli*, and to do so is to be ahistorical.

To be sure, there had been other Swazi councillors who had clandestine activities with European concessionaires and Shepstone, such Tikhuba Magongo and John Gama. Magongo and Gama were indeed double-dealers in Swazi politics, for they were councillors who regularly attended meetings called by the Swazi queens and took active part in discussions, and yet they made deals with Europeans which were not known by the queens. Furthermore Gama had been a very close confidant of Theophilus Shepstone Jr. and of the Transvaal and British officials in Swaziland. Such activities by these Swazi councillors are important aspects of the history of Swazi relations with Europeans.

The Establishment of Transvaal's Colonial Rule in Swaziland

In December 1894 the governments of Britain and Transvaal signed another Convention which placed Swaziland under the Transvaal administration without annexation to the Transvaal and this to be done without a provision requiring the consent of Swazi rulers. Britain granted the Transvaal government a right to administer Swaziland, because of the predominance of the Transvaal Boer concessions in that country. This was so, in spite of the fact that the majority of European residents in

³⁰For a discussion of the significance of the concept of race to the European colonialists and their use of it as a political control in colonial Africa, see Christopher Fyfe, "Race, empire and the historians," *Race & Class*, 33, 4 (1992), 15-30.

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Swaziland were British subjects.³¹ The reasons for the British government's ceding of colonial administration in Swaziland to the Transvaal are traceable to Francis De Winton's report on Swaziland which he had submitted to the Colonial Office on February 1890. After his observation that most of the critical concessions from a government's point of view, concessions such as postal, railway, telegraph, banking and customs, among others, had been bought by the Transvaal government,³² De Winton had recommended that for practical reasons the Transvaal government should be allowed to administer Swaziland. Otherwise, De Winton pointed out, there would be perpetual problems between the governments of Britain and the Transvaal. De Winton illustrated his point with the following scenario:

Nearly all the available revenue of the country under these concessions will be in the hands of the South African Republic, and unless they are purchased there will be an 'imperium in imperio,' a state of affairs which could only lead to endless complications between the two Governments. This would also apply to any joint action which might be proposed by Her Majesty's Government, as the English Commissioner would be placed in the somewhat anomalous position of a part ruler of a country, while his colleague would have the disposal of all the available revenue, unless some agreement were arrived at between the two Governments."³³

The period of the Anglo-Transvaal Provisional Government Committee rule in Swaziland from December 1889 to December 1894 had proved the validity of De Winton's point, for there were some complications between the British and Transvaal

³¹Cecil Headlam, ed., The Milner Papers: South Africa, 1897-1899 (London: Cassell, 1931), p. 182. See also Bonner, Kings, p. 223, and an appendix, pp. 225-229.

³²De Winton, "Report on Swaziland," p. 14.

³³*Ibid.*

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officials regarding the coordination of their policies in Swaziland. Like it had done with the previous 1890 Anglo-Transvaal Convention, the Transvaal government viewed the 1894 Anglo-Transvaal Convention as a temporary arrangement, for its ultimate ambition was the total incorporation of Swaziland into the Transvaal.³⁴

Article II of the 1894 Anglo-Transvaal Convention stipulated that, "without the incorporation of Swaziland into the South African Republic, the Government of the South African Republic shall have and be secured in all rights and powers of protection, legislation, jurisdiction and administration over Swaziland and the inhabitants thereof,"³⁵ subject to certain arrangements. This Article established Swaziland as a colony of the Transvaal in the sense of other colonies by European powers in Africa, i.e., as colonies generally had not been incorporated territorially with the colonizing power. This was a new phenomenon to the Transvaal Boer Republic, which had so far expanded the size of its territory by either conquering the neighboring African states or incorporating territories through border adjustments.

³⁴Headlam, ed., Milner, p. 182. On Transvaal's view of 1894 Convention as a temporary measure, see also the Governor and High Commissioner Alfred Milner's confidential note to be communicated verbally by the British Resident in Pretoria to Paul Kruger, President of the South African Republic, 3rd September 1898 (J.S.M. Matsebula Collection, Special Collection, University of Swaziland).

³⁵A Convention Between Her Majesty The Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the South African Republic, December 1894 (Colonial Office Library, C/O 1213), p. 2. High Commissioner Henry B. Loch signed this Convention for the British Government and State President of the South African Republic (SAR) S.J.P. Kruger and the State Secretary of the SAR, Dr. W.J. Leyds, signed it on behalf of the Transvaal Government. Hereafter I will refer to this document simple as the 1894 Convention.

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Article II clause (1) stated "that the young king Ungwane alias Uhili alias Ubunu after he has become of age, according to native law, shall be and remain the Paramount Chief of the Swazies in Swazieland with the usual powers of such Paramount Chief in so far as the same are not inconsistent with civilized laws and customs."³⁶ This arrangement degraded the status of a Swazi leader from that of a king to paramount chief in keeping with similar arrangements in other British colonies in Africa. Of course, this was another innovation in Transvaal's colonial venture, for the latter was known for simply crushing the office of kingship in conquered territories. It is ironic that the Anglo-Transvaal governments were silent about the incumbent queen mother, in spite of the fact that since the end of 1889 when these powers sent their Joint Commission to Swaziland, and up to the time of signing the Convention, these powers were challenged by women leaders in Swaziland and not by King Bhunu who was still a minor. By limiting the jurisdiction of the Swazi Paramount Chief to only Swazi affairs, the governments of the Transvaal and Britain were designing a 'native policy' which was a common phenomenon in British colonial Africa.

Article II clause (2) made provision for the Transvaal government administration to collect concession payments from concessionaires according to the terms of the existing arrangements regarding the private revenue of the Swazi King and to give such moneys to the Swazi Paramount Chief.³⁷ As long as the Swazi leaders were guaranteed

³⁶1894 Convention, p. 2.

³⁷1894 Convention, p. 2. Private Revenue concession is also known as a concession to end all concessions or a King's Concession. John Harrington of Barberton had secured it

the continual flow of this annual income from concessions, an income that had been there since the days of the late King Mbandzeni, it was improbable that they would completely defy the emerging Transvaal colonial authority. To do so would have perhaps resulted in the Swazi leaders' loss of access to this source of funds. And that these funds were channeled to them via the Transvaal government was significant, for it established this government as the final authority on national economic affairs of the country and this also provided it with a leverage of power over the Swazi leaders. Therefore, this clause had somehow sweetened the colonial pill which was swallowed only by the Swazi leaders, to the exclusion of their subjects. By so doing, the Swazi leaders had vested interests in controlling their subjects and preventing them from engaging in open resistance against the colonial state, for it was the leaders who stood to lose their financial stake from the colonial state in the event of Swazi military defiance.

Article II clause (4) made provision for the payment of hut taxes or other taxes by the emaSwati to the Transvaal authorities in Swaziland. But the actual payment and collection of taxes was deferred until 1898. The clause further stipulated that such taxes should not exceed the amount paid by the Swazi people who lived in the Transvaal Boer Republic.³⁸ It must be remembered that hut tax and other taxes like poll tax were used by

from King Mbandzeni just immediately before the latter died in 1889. This concession conferred upon him and his heirs perpetual right to collect all taxes, rents, concessions, in Swaziland, in return for a yearly payment of £12,000 to the Swazi king. Harrington had sold this concession immediately as soon as he secured it to the Transvaal government in September 1889. See T.V. Bulpin, Lost Trails of the Transvaal (Johannesburg: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1965), p. 339.

³⁸1894 Convention, pp. 2-3.

colonial states in Africa to generate local revenue from the colonized people. The clause on hut tax for the emaSwati was a further indication of the presence of a colonial state in Swaziland. But the emaSwati were not to feel the pinch of colonial state taxes until 1898 when that clause would be effective. One authority of the history of colonial tax has recently reminded us that "in the very early relations between a conquering power and the conquered state taxation is used to test whether the conquering power has established some legitimacy, in addition to securing submission."³⁹

One of the arrangements of this Convention which later gave rise to complications pertaining to the implementation of its terms, especially with regard to Anglo-Transvaal-Swazi power relations was Article II clause (3) which stipulated:

That the management of the internal affairs of the natives shall be in accordance with their own laws and customs, including the laws and customs of inheritance and succession, and that the native laws and customs shall be administered by the native chiefs entitled to administer the same, in such manner as they are in accordance with the native law and custom at present administering, in so far as the said laws and customs are not inconsistent with civilized laws and customs, or with any law in force in Swazieland made pursuant to this Convention, and the natives are guaranteed in their continued use and occupation of land now in their possession, and of all grazing or agricultural rights to which they are at pretent [sic] entitled; provided that no law made hereafter in Swazieland shall be in conflict with the guarantees given to the Swazie in this Convention.⁴⁰

This Article purported to do a variety of things for the emaSwati. It committed the governments of Britain and Transvaal to maintaining the Swazi independence. It provided self-rule by the emaSwati according to their precolonial government structure.

³⁹Kaniki, "Colonialism," p. 31.

⁴⁰1894 Convention, p. 2.

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It guaranteed the rights of the emaSwati to their lands. It prohibited the Transvaal government from making laws which might undermine the rights and guarantees of the emaSwati as enshrined in this Convention. In a nutshell, this clause prevented the Transvaal government from ruling the emaSwati. In this way the Swazi precolonial state was not crushed, but merely moved away from the center stage of running the affairs of the whole country. Its political and administrative institutions were not only left intact, but were also guaranteed to reproduce themselves as long as such a process was not in conflict with the British and Transvaal values. Perhaps, this arrangement might be considered as one of the reasons for the absence of an open revolt or resistance by the Swazi monarchy against the emerging Transvaal Boer colonial state in Swaziland. The Swazi rulers were still accorded their privileged position of power over their subjects. They could still continue to exercise their aristocratic form of government upon their subjects. And perhaps even more from their perspective after the terms of this Convention were implemented was the realization that after all Swazi rulers had been still left better off as compared with other African leaders in southern Africa. Indeed, the emaSwati had not only witnessed the manner in which other chiefdoms and kingdoms were militarily conquered by the British and the Transvaal Boers, the Swazi army had also sometimes collaborated with European armies. For example, the Swazi knew well the way King Sekhukhune of the Pedi Kingdom lost his kingship to the British and the Boers in 1879. Sekhukhune had in fact surrendered to the hands of the Swazi military.⁴¹

⁴¹See Manelisi Genge, "The Role of the AmaSwazi in the Destruction of the BaPedi State, 1876-1879" (Seminar Paper in African History, Michigan State University, Fall Semester

The Swazi army contributed to the British defeat of King Cetshwayo of the amaZulu during the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879.⁴²

Article XIV stipulated that "Her Majesty's Government reserves the power of exercising diplomatic representation in favour of Swazie natives or British subjects in case any provision of this Convention shall not be fairly and faithfully observed."⁴³ By this clause evidently the British government did not wish to leave the Transvaal government with unlimited powers as a colonial state in Swaziland. British capital had long had a foothold in the country during the concessionary era and Article VII made provision for the protection of British subjects and their economic interests in Swaziland.⁴⁴ Article XV made provision for the appointment by British government of a British Consular Officer to stay in Swaziland.⁴⁵ Of course, both the British and Transvaal governments had since December 1889 their representatives residing in Swaziland. The

1993), pp. 1-30; Matsebula, *History*, pp. 75-81, and Bonner, *Kings*, pp. 149-156. For a discussion of the destruction of the BaPedi Kingdom by the British and the Boers, see Peter Delius, *The Land Belongs To Us: The Pedi Polity, the Boers and the British in the Nineteenth-century Transvaal* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983).

⁴²The emaSwati's military involvement on the British side against the AmaZulu in 1879 was still remembered by the Swazi leaders in early 1900s, who used such a participation as grounds for better treatment by the British colonial authorities in Swaziland. See Swazi Chief Sichobane's statement a meeting with the High Commissioner, Alfred Milner, in "Report of a Deputation which waited on H.E. The Governor at Sunnyside, Pretoria, 4 July 1905" (RCS 732/13, SNA). For Swazi involvement with the British against the AmaZulu, see John Laband, *Kingdom in Crisis: The Zulu response to the British invasion of 1879* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1992), pp. 238-239.

⁴³1894 Convention, p. 6.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 6.

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other Articles and clauses of this Convention were similar to those of 1890 Convention and dealt with matters of interests between the Transvaal and British governments.

The most important aspect of the 1894 Convention is that it formally established Transvaal as a colonial power in Swaziland, without seeking Swazi consent. However, at the same time this Convention guaranteed the position of the British government as a watchdog over the Transvaal government's implementation of the terms which established a colonial state in Swaziland. By so doing, the Convention deprived the Transvaal government a monopoly in the interpretation of this instrument. After the signing of this Convention in December 1894 that Transvaal government got into the business of refining the colonial state whose foundation had been already in place in Swaziland since 1890 after the Anglo-Transvaal Convention. The major weakness of the 1894 Convention was its silence on the position of the Swazi monarchy, especially concerning what would happen to it should it transgress the laws of the new colonial state. It was one thing to state that the emaSwati would be allowed to administer their 'own affairs' according to their laws and customs, as long as these were not inconsistent with or repugnant to European laws and customs, as was stipulated in Article II clause (3), or to demote the status of the Swazi king from kingship to 'paramount chief', and quite another to claim a right to exercise a final authority in the country. And what would even complicate matters later was that the 1894 Convention was, like any colonial arrangement, a European document imposed on the Swazi state. Therefore the real test of the strength of this document and of the colonial state it ushered in was the implementation phase, which is usually a practical phase following the formulation of

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terms and signing of documents. This test was later to prove difficult, for the 1894 Convention, an instrument which established Transvaal authority in Swaziland, fell short of granting the Transvaal government unlimited power to govern Swaziland as a fully fledged colony. This instrument merely granted the Transvaal power to administer Swaziland,⁴⁶ with the British government on the side line ready to call foul each time it perceived Transvaal's deviation from what was laid down in the 1894 Convention.

The Monarchy: From Kingship to Paramount Chieftaincy

The Transvaal administration as provided in the 1894 Anglo-Transvaal Convention was formally introduced in 1895 in Swaziland. It replaced the Provincial Government Committee, which had administered Anglo-Transvaal interests in Swaziland since December 1889. On February 20th, 1895 Johannes Christoffel Krogh assumed his new position as the Transvaal Special Commissioner for Swaziland and he "read the proclamation establishing the administration to the Swazi nation."⁴⁷ On the following day this proclamation was gazetted by the Transvaal government. Thus, Transvaal colonial rule became effective in Swaziland.

The establishment of the Transvaal administration in Swaziland coincided with Bhunu's coming of age. On February 19, 1895 Bhunu officially assumed his position as a co-leader of the emaSwati with his mother Labotsibeni, who now became a fully-fledged co-leader in her capacity as Queen Mother. Queen Regent Tibati Nkambule then

⁴⁶Extract from Letter. Sir A. Milner to Mr. Conyngham Greene, 24/12/1897, in Headlam, ed., Milner, p.184.

⁴⁷Jones, Register, p. 326.

retired from Swazi politics and later died on June 5, 1895. Proclamations which announced Bhunu's majority and his official assumption of duties as the Swazi leader introduced him in an ambiguous title as the King and Paramount Chief of Swaziland.⁴⁸ Whether this ambiguity had been a mere matter of semantics is difficult to tell. However, what is certain is that Bhunu was indeed a 'paramount chief' in the real sense of the word as that title was applicable in other areas in British Colonial Africa. He was not even a 'paramount chief' of the whole territory of Swaziland, but only that of the emaSwati and the area settled by the Swazi society. He had no say whatsoever in areas occupied by Europeans, national economy of the country, defense, and the national legal system in Swaziland. He had no legal jurisdiction to deal with any disputes between a Swazi and a European resident in Swaziland. Such disputes belonged to the jurisdiction of the European-style High Court of Swaziland, which was established by the governments of Britain and Transvaal in 1890.

Thus Bhunu did not have power which was enjoyed by precolonial Swazi kings, and some of the famous chiefs in Swaziland had noticed this loss of power. For example, it is reported that in 1896 that two prominent Swazi chiefs, Maja and Tsekwane, had told Bhunu that they were leaving his authority, because the Transvaal government had introduced Justices of the Peace in what used to be their jurisdictions. Their departure was only stopped, we are told, by the intervention of the British officials who informed the Transvaal government that its Justices of the Peace had no jurisdiction on matters

⁴⁸See two "Proclamations" issued in Bhunu's and Labotsibeni's names of February 19, 1895 (File S. 4, SNA). See also Jones, Register, p. 458.

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'purely' Swazi.⁴⁹ The intervention of a British official to stop the Transvaal government from establishing the authority of its Justices of the Peace in what was 'strictly' a jurisdiction of the Swazi 'paramount chief' according to the 1894 Anglo-Transvaal Convention indicates the degree to which the British and not the Swazi leaders, were a decisive force able to check the Transvaal power in the emerging power relations in what was now (1895) colonial Swaziland.

Therefore a reference to Bhunu as 'King' or 'Swazi King' by scholars of Swazi history obscures both the extent to which European colonialism had established itself in Swaziland by the turn of the nineteenth-century, and the nature of such colonialism. In a real sense of the word, Mbandzeni ought to be regarded as the last king of Swaziland. Once scholars recognize this point, then they open up the possibility of asking fresh questions about the survival of the Swazi royal house in the face of European colonialism, questions such as why did the colonial powers allow it to survive, or did it survive on its own accord? Who benefitted from the existence of, though constrained, royal family? What were power relations between the Swazi royal house and new European colonial state? And what title or label should scholars use to refer to the royal family in colonial Swaziland? At its best, a scholarly reference to Bhunu as King of Swaziland or King of the emaSwati engages in historical mythology. Here I do not intend to elaborate much on how this mythology emerged in the historiography of

⁴⁹For the incidents of the two chiefs and Justice of the Peace, see Simelane, "Swazi Resistance," 133-134.

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Swaziland, for one scholar has recently analyzed this well.⁵⁰ Instead, I will concentrate on analyzing the gradual diminution of the Swazi leaders' power by the emerging colonial state in Swaziland. The main aim for doing so is to argue that Swaziland was indeed a colonial territory in the 1890s and the Swazi-Anglo-Boer power relations changed accordingly to reflect this colonial reality.

Even the Swazi queens, Tibati and Labotsibeni had recognized that Bhunu's powers were much limited as compared to his late father King Mbandzeni when he ascended the throne. On March 26, 1895, the Transvaal government sent its Commissioners under the leadership of General Joubert to 'proclaim' Bhunu a 'paramount chief'. Let us recall that previously in 1875 the Transvaal government had sent a commando four hundred men to the coronation of Mbandzeni as king of Swaziland. Here then was a repeat of this a practice though with much less military pomp. After Joubert was shown where Bhunu was seated, he declared that, "everyone sees that he is the child that is called to rule over the people. Take his hand. You must give him to us to make him Paramount Chief over his people."⁵¹ Labotsibeni confirmed Joubert's claim by Boers to be making Swazi leaders, but she complained of the power constraints under which Bhunu was expected to rule the emaSwati. She responded to Joubert by stating:

Yes, Chiefs. I am glad my child has been handed over to you by his Grandmother [Queen Regent]. The law you have given him is good. I thank you. You have appointed him King the same as you did his father. You have made him King the

⁵⁰Kaniki, "Colonialism," pp. 1-50.

⁵¹"Meeting at Enkanini Kraal, Swaziland," March 26, 1895 (?) 1898 (?) (The Miller Papers, ms 578 b; J.S.M. Matsebula Collection, University of Swaziland).

same as you did his father but you are taking away from him, the right to kill. If anyone does wrong some day and he wants to kill him, you will be angry.⁵²

Joubert, for his part, flatly refused to grant any additional powers to those which were already tailor made for Bhunu as 'Paramount Chief', powers which were similar to those of other 'paramount chiefs' elsewhere in colonial Africa. Labotsibeni retorted, "no, but you must give him the right to kill [punish and discipline] anyone who worries him - the right to kill and then report....How can you make him King if you wont allow him to spill blood?"⁵³ Joubert replied her saying that, "If you have any trouble go to Mr [Johannes Christoffel] Krogh and he will communicate your worries to the Government. Mr. Krogh will advise you when you are in trouble."⁵⁴

The above discussion between the Swazi queens, their councillors and the Transvaal Commissioners under Joubert's leadership dealt with issues of power. Although the Swazi queens referred to Bhunu as King, they realized that his powers were far limited as compared with the previous Swazi kings. Joubert, for his part, asserted Transvaal government's position as supreme political authority in Swaziland. His statements also throw light on the Transvaal Boers' involvement in the making of Swazi kings. Joubert addressed Bhunu as a 'paramount chief' and not a 'king'. Indeed, even as early as at this point, 1895, it would have been a misnomer for Joubert, as the Swazi queens and their councillors were doing, to refer to Bhunu as 'king' for with the

⁵²*Ibid.*

⁵³*Ibid.*

⁵⁴*Ibid.*

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establishment of the Transvaal colonial rule in Swaziland in December 1894, the idea of a kingdom of Swaziland became only a geographical expression in the minds of the Swazi leaders. Recently one scholar of Swazi history has noted that "between 1903 and 1967 there was neither king nor kingdom of Swaziland."⁵⁵ Here I suggest that this observation in fact applies from December 1894 when the Anglo-Transvaal signed a Convention by which they imposed Transvaal's political power on the Swazi political institution.

The period from 1891 to 1898 was characterized by hiccups in the relationships between the Swazi rulers, their subjects and the Transvaal administrators as Boers were prone to flaunting individual rights of the emaSwati in various ways. The common accusations against the Boers by the emaSwati were the grazing of their stock on the latter's grounds without permission, stock theft, especially cattle and the grass burning.⁵⁶

⁵⁵Kaniki, "Colonialism," p. 22.

⁵⁶See for example, A Deposition by a Swazi *Ndvuna* Gomba, witnessed by Joseph Boyston, to Geo Hutchinson, Justice of the Peace, Piggs Peak, June 15, 1891; copy of a letter from British Commissioner, Col. Martin, Swaziland, to the High Commissioner, Cape Town, 1th March 1891; a complain lodged by a certain Mhlaba against Boers who destroyed his farm by grazing their cattle on it at Ingwempisi District, see "Extract from Sub-Inspector, B.B. Stewart's Report for October 1894, certified as a true copy by Commissioner S.G.C. Police, Bremersdorp, 2/10/1894; see also a Private letter, "Extract from private letter from Sub-Inspector Stewart," in which he mentions that certain Boers named Ferreira and Delport went to Mhlaba's kraal on one night and took away all his cattle. But Mhlaba had not officially reported this incident at the time of Stewart's writing of this note; copy of a confidential letter from J.C. Krogh, Transvaal Special Commissioner, Bremersdorp, to the High Commissioner, 24th July 1897. This letter reports the complains brought to Krogh by both the Paramount Chief Bhunu and other Swazi people. All these documents are found in file No. S. 50, SNA, with a subject: "Complaints against Boers and Officials of the South African Republic." This file also contains documents by European British subjects who complain of grass burning, stock theft and trespassing on their properties by Boers.

The emaSwati also complained of beatings by Boers and that the refusal of Transvaal Boer justice system in Swaziland to try case of accusations of beatings by the emaSwati against the Boers.⁵⁷ In their sum, these incidents reveal the raw nature of Boer colonial rule in Swaziland and the Swazi leaders' inability to stop the arrogant Boer exercise of power over their subjects. Labotsibeni is reported to have expressed her frustration with Boer rule by saying that "the misrule they [emaSwati] receive from the Boers is becoming undinable [undeniable] and she has resolved to hang herself. But before all that she will tell the whole cause which brought her to commit such an unhuman crime."⁵⁸ The writer of this letter added that, "the thought of her [Labotsibeni] being a widow and the Paramount Chief yet young and yet to be so maltreated by the Government that had such glorious promises to treat them kindly is really unbearable." Apart from the point that the Transvaal administration had abandoned its earlier promises of good administration, this view conveys the harshness and cruelty of the Transvaal colonial rule. Here I can only speculate that if the Swazi leaders viewed the Boer administration as harsh, it must have been worse for the ordinary Swazi people, who did not enjoy a privilege of the protection of power, which the Swazi leaders enjoyed, albeit with serious limitations.

⁵⁷See for example, a letter from Daniel Luthuli, an employee of *The Times of Swaziland* (Newspaper), Bremersdorp, to J. Smuts, British Consul, Swaziland, August 11, 1898. See also a covering letter for Luthuli's letter from Allister Miller, Manager, Umbandine (Swaziland) Concession, Bremersdorp, to the British Consul, August 11th, 1898, and letter from Allister Miller, to the British Consul, Bremersdorp, August 16th, 1898. In this letter Miller thanked the British Consul for his influence in bringing Luthuli's case to Court for a retrial. All these letters are contained in file No. S. 50, SNA.

⁵⁸A letter with the letterhead as Zomboti Royal Kraal, January 28, 1896, but without a name of its author (File No. S. 50, SNA).

But, if the Swazi rulers had been so far immune from some indignities which come with a colonial rule like disrespect for individual dignity and subordination to an alien legal system, they soon lost all that privilege of being above the experience of colonial humiliation daily. On April 9, 1898 Mbhabha Sibandze, a leading councillor (chief *indvuna*) and his two assistants, Mazendhlela and Mpanzane were executed at the Zombodze royal residence, allegedly on the instructions of Bhunu, Paramount Chief. This incident had wider and important implications for the affairs of Swaziland, and its significance has been explored by various scholars.⁵⁹ Therefore, I do not intend to retell this incident here. Instead, I only focus on its implications on power relations in colonial Swaziland. One important point to be made first is that the enquiry conducted by the governments of Britain and the Transvaal on this incident failed to find any person directly responsible for the murder of Sibandze and his assistants. Even Paramount Chief Bhunu who was the main focus of the enquiry was not found to be directly responsible, but since he was the paramount chief and the incident had happened at the royal residence, the institution of the paramount chieftaincy was held responsible.

The incident exposed the ambiguities and contradictions contained in the Anglo-Transvaal governments' constitution for a colonial state in Swaziland, namely the 1894 Convention which had imposed Transvaal colonial rule in Swaziland. The difficulty was that until this incident the Swazi royal house still had perceived itself somehow autonomous, and acted so in when dealing with the affairs affecting its subjects, the

⁵⁹For example, see Matsebula, *History*, pp. 164-167; Simelane, "Swazi Resistance," 136-141; Crush, *Struggle*, p. 44, and Genge, "Law," Chapter Five.

emaSwati. When Bhunu was summoned by the Transvaal authorities in Swaziland to appear in the Magistrate Court to answer questions related with Sibandze's death, he refused claiming that the Transvaal colonial state had no jurisdiction over him. He then fled to the British Resident Magistrate at Ingwavuma, Natal, for asylum. On July 11, 1898 Edmund Fraser, the British Resident in Pretoria, Transvaal, informed the Transvaal government that Bhunu had sought asylum to the British authorities at Ingwavuma.⁶⁰

The Transvaal government had attempted to use this incident as an opportunity to dissolve the institution of the paramountcy by dividing the Swazi paramount chief's authority among four minor chiefs. The alternate plan was to replace the recalcitrant Bhunu with a Transvaal government's puppet, Masumpa, who like Bhunu was King Mbandzeni's son. Masumpa had been one of the contenders of the throne after Mbandzeni's death. When he lost the contest he had fled the country to the Piet Retief district of the Transvaal, where he went to live with his uncle Memezi Dlamini.⁶¹ Transvaal President Paul Kruger's plan to replace Bhunu with Masumpa reveals his government's ignorance of the significant function of a queen mother in succession issues in Swazi politics and also of the diffused nature of the power of the in former Swazi monarchy. The monarchy was constituted by women and men from various lineages.

⁶⁰Letter, Edmund Fraser, Her Majesty's Agency, Pretoria, to F.W. Reitz, State Secretary, July 11th, 1898, in "Correspondentie van De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek met betrekking tot de Crimineele Jurisdictie van het Hooggerechtshof van den dood van den Induna M'Baba en anderen in verband met de Conventie van Volksrust van 1894," No. 2, 1899 (Pretoria, 1899), No. 8, p. 8. Hereafter I will simple refer to this document as de Conventie van Volksrust van 1894.

⁶¹Crush, Struggle, p. 44.

These individuals had, similar to the distribution of power in precolonial Dahomean kingdom, "wielded various powers - at times in concert and at times at cross-purposes."⁶²

The multifacetedness and diffusion of power of the Swazi monarchy resulted in those involved in its politics to defend themselves against any attempts aimed at undermining the corporate polity of the monarchy.

High Commissioner for South Africa Alfred Milner and Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain objected to Kruger's designs regarding the diminution of the Swazi paramountcy. Milner, for his part, wanted to use this opportunity to compel the Boers to acknowledge the British as co-rulers in Swaziland, though in an indirect way. For instance, he told Fraser:

What I am trying to do, though I do not hold a particularly strong hand, is to drive them [Boers] into making formal proposals to us, by making them feel the irregularity and the danger, of going blundering on without reference to us. Of course, they detest coming to us, but I don't very well see how they can avoid it. When they do, it seems to me that the first thing is to settle about Bunu. He is a wretched creature, but legally he is as much Paramount Chief as ever he was.⁶³

Of course, Milner was motivated by his own agenda in protecting Bhunu and the Swazi monarchy from being dismantled by the Transvaal government. His actions were a part of a larger Anglo-Boer rivalry over the internal affairs of the South African Republic

⁶²Edna G. Bay, Wives of the Leopard: Gender, Politics, and Culture in the Kingdom of Dahomey (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998), p. 7.

⁶³[Private and Confidential] letter from Sir A. Milner to Edmund Fraser, 8/7/1898, in Headlam, ed., Milner, p. 188. For a discussion of Mbhabha's execution and the resultant complications for the Swazi monarchy, see Genge, "Law," chapter 5, and Crush, Struggle, p. 44.

which spilled over to Swaziland. (This rivalry culminated in the South African War, 1899-1902.) He was also concerned with the attitude of the Colonial Office regarding the affairs of Swaziland in general. First, Chamberlain had a restraining influence on Milner regarding any action that might precipitate an Anglo-Boer military confrontation, particularly in light of these states' tense diplomatic relations resulting from the failure of the Jameson Raid to overthrow Kruger's government.⁶⁴ Second, the Colonial Office under Chamberlain wanted to avoid a war with the Transvaal over Swaziland.⁶⁵ Milner was attempting to restrain the Transvaal government from establishing itself as an absolute authority by excluding a provision for British consent, a cooperation which had been made a requirement in the terms of the 1894 Anglo-Transvaal Convention which established Transvaal administration in Swaziland. Milner also protected the emaSwati from the Transvaal's wish to use military force in compelling Bhunu to comply with its demand that he appeared before a court of law presided over by the Transvaal. He pointed out that he did so because he wanted to maintain the semi-independence of the emaSwati.⁶⁶ But, despite this rhetoric, as argued elsewhere, Milner's actions were

⁶⁴Reginald Ivan Lovell, The Struggle For South Africa, 1875-1899: A Study in Economic Imperialism (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), pp. 25, 398. For a discussion of the Jameson Raid, and the attempted coup and its consequences, see Robert I. Rotberg, The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the Pursuit of Power (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), chapter 9, and Bulpin, Trails, pp. 393-406.

⁶⁵Lovell, Struggle, p. 348.

⁶⁶A confidential telegram from Sir A. Milner to Chamberlain, May 25, 1898, in Headlam, ed. Milner, p. 185, and Telegram from Sir A. Milner to Chamberlain, May 30, 1898, in *ibid.*, pp. 185-186. For an intense correspondence between Milner and other British decision makers in the Colonial Office and in Transvaal on the Transvaal Government

motivated by his desire to preserve the office of the Swazi paramountcy in order to build a British colonial rule upon it. Such rhetoric must be understood as a further demonstration of the paradoxes of British diplomacy, "that what is usually expressed, verbally or written, is not actually what is in practice."⁶⁷ Other scholars have referred to this kind of contradiction in British diplomacy as "'masked words', which, either as the euphemisms of diplomacy, or more forcefully yet, as fictive texts, disguise ideas or fact."⁶⁸ In his own private admission, Milner told Fraser that he resisted the Transvaal's potential devastating treatment of Bhunu, not because he was defending him, but that he did so in order to make the Transvaal government appear incompetent to administer Swaziland without cooperation with the British.⁶⁹ The use of the Swazi paramountcy as a foundation for a British rule was a viable method towards winning legitimacy in the eyes of the emaSwati.⁷⁰ Other scholars have drawn our attention to the European colonial powers' preoccupation with the question of legitimacy.⁷¹

actions in the Bhunu affair, see *ibid.*, pp. 182-192. For a discussion of Anglo-Transvaal rivalry in the context of imposing a European colonial rule in Swaziland, see Genge, "Law," chapter 5.

⁶⁷Mlahagwa, "Capital."

⁶⁸John A. Hobson, quoting Ruskin, quoted in Robert H. MacDonald, The Language of Empire: Myths and Metaphors of Popular Imperialism, 1880-1918 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 5.

⁶⁹Private and confidential letter from Sir A. Milner to Edmund Fraser, 8/7/1898, in Headlam, ed., Milner, p. 188.

⁷⁰For a fuller discussion of this point, see Genge, "Law," pp. 147-150.

⁷¹See Patrick Cole, Modern and Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 2, Low, "Lion Rampant," Political Studies, 3

At the same time as the Transvaal government was involved in the crisis with Bhunu, it attempted to bargain with the Portuguese in Mozambique for a strip of land along the Maputo River in exchange for a piece of land on the north-east of Swaziland, in order to get access to the sea. Such a deal would have allowed the Transvaal to enter into "intrigues with foreign powers" in the shape of Portugal, and by so doing, would have threatened British imperial designs in the region. Besides this concern, the British concessionaires in Swaziland bitterly complained to Milner about the Transvaal's bargain with Portugal. This deal also threatened the arrangement of the Boundary Commissions of 1880 and 1888 under the British leadership, which delimited the boundaries of Swaziland.⁷²

Therefore, it could be argued, Milner's actions were geared more towards protecting British interests in Swaziland which he considered vital for Britain's dominance in the region than for a concern with the emaSwati treatment by the Transvaal. From Milner's view, Swaziland was a vital corner whose frontier had remained partially closed, but still fraught with difficulties emanating from the Transvaal government's handling of Bhunu's case that threatened to explode into a Boer-Swazi military conflict and thereby highlighting the issue of semi-independence of the emaSwati. But, given the tense Anglo-Boer relations in the Transvaal by 1898, Joseph

(1964), 242.

⁷²Extract from Letter. Sir A. Milner to Sir W. Hely Hutchinson, in Headlam, ed., Milner, p. 183. For a discussion of the Transvaal's old age dream for a route to the sea, see Garson, "Swaziland." For a concern with "intrigues," see Extract from Letter. Sir A. Milner to Fraser, in Headlam, ed., Milner, p. 191.

Chamberlain did not want to embroil the British in a war with the Transvaal over the issue of Swazi semi-independence. Milner concurred with Chamberlain, but he had attached great importance in resolving the Swazi-Boer dispute before leaving for England.⁷³ He told Fraser, "still I am prepared to stay any time, a week, a month, a year rather than let the settlement be prejudiced in the smallest degree by a personal consideration. For every reason it is desirable to get the question settled *quickly*, but not to hurry or scamp it."⁷⁴

Whilst the Transvaal and British governments were still negotiating Bhunu's affair, the Transvaal sent Commandant-General P.J. Joubert to Swaziland to confer authority upon some Swazi councillors to be exercised during the absence of Bhunu.

Milner opposed this move as well, for the Boers:

cannot depose Bunu by themselves, or appoint a successor or divide his authority among a number of Chiefs. *Any or all of these things may be the best things to do, but it is only by the consent of both parties to the Conventions that they are feasible.* I particularly don't want to appear a mere obstructive or to cling desperately to a system which I know can't work. But I must cling to the principle that a system established by common agreement, even if found unworkable, can only be altered by common agreement.⁷⁵

It was precisely an absence of such an Anglo-Transvaal common agreement on

⁷³A reply by telegram, Chamberlain to Milner, May 28, 1898, in Headlam, ed., *Milner*, p. 185, and [confidential] telegram from Sir A. Milner to Chamberlain, in *ibid.* For Milner's response, see Telegram from Sir A. Milner to Chamberlain, in *ibid.*, pp. 185-186.

⁷⁴Private, Extract from letter, Sir A. Milner to Fraser, August 19, 1898, in Headlam, ed., *Milner*, p. 191. Emphasis in the original.

⁷⁵[private and Confidential] letter from Sir A. Milner to Mr. Edmund Fraser, 8 July 1893, in Headlam, ed. *Milner*, p. 188. Emphasis added

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how to refashion the former Swazi monarchy, which delayed the imposition of a fully-fledged European colonial rule in Swaziland. Here it is important to restate the obvious, that Milner's views on the need for an Anglo-Transvaal consent on how to reshape or depose Bhunu were a hidden transcript, kept from both the Swazi rulers and the Transvaal government. The Swazi leaders, for their part, were by this time pressing their request to Milner for their country to be placed under the British "protection". But the protest of the Swazi monarchy alone against the introduction of the Transvaal administration, was not a sufficient force to forestall the establishment of European colonial rule in Swaziland. As long as the Transvaal government was involved in Swaziland, the British government's actions there were limited by what De Winton had identified as an "imperium in imperio," that is, government within a government.⁷⁶ Such a limitation provided the Swazi monarchy with an opportunity to dodge the harsh realities of the European colonial rule. The signing of the Protocol to the Anglo-Transvaal Convention of 1894, by British and Transvaal governments on October 5, 1898 was, among others, an attempt to bring about a common ground by these powers on how to deal with the former Swazi monarchy. This protocol had effectively submerged the authority of the Swazi monarchy under that of the Transvaal government, a development that the latter government had failed to accomplish without the consent of the British. This was now achieved by stripping the Swazi paramountcy of its legal and political

⁷⁶De Winton, "Report on Swaziland," Command, 6201, p. 14.

prerogatives to rule as the final authority in Swaziland.⁷⁷ But, even more important than that was the fact that after the signing of the protocol in 1898 the Swazi paramount chief was himself subject to the Transvaal law in Swaziland, should he transgress the limitations imposed on him by this protocol.⁷⁸

By depriving the Swazi paramount chief of legal and political prerogatives which were normally enjoyed by a supreme political authority in any country, the governments of Britain and the Transvaal brought colonialism to Swaziland in its full weight. Bhunu's powers and jurisdiction were now like those of any paramount chief in British colonial Africa. It is important to recognize this point, for it helps us to realize that there was indeed nothing exceptional in the manner in which Swaziland went through the colonial process, with the only exception that it did not experience military conquest from its European colonizers. Apart from this point, Swaziland shares similar colonial experiences with other colonized states in Africa. One Swazi historian fails to observe fundamental changes brought to the Swazi paramountcy at the end of Anglo-Transvaal squabble over the form and jurisdiction of the Swazi paramountcy within the Transvaal colonial state. This particular historian states that the British High Commissioner had compelled the Transvaal government to finally recognize Bhunu as 'King' of Swaziland.

⁷⁷There is a direct correlation between being a final authority of a state and its legal system. For a discussion of this, see Robin Luckham, "The State And The Legal System," in Yashi Ghai, Robin Luckham and Francis Snyder, eds. The Political Economy of Law: A Third World Reader (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 562-567.

⁷⁸For a discussion of the Protocol to the Anglo-Transvaal Convention of 1894 and its impact on the Swazi monarchy, see Genge, "Law," pp. 137-146.

He asserts, "the South African Republic was left with no choice but to agree that Bhunu was still King of Swaziland and should be recognized as such."⁷⁹ This statement must at best be taken as one of the scholarly contributions to the historical myth making which has for so long characterized many studies which focus on the Swazi monarchy.

Effective as it was in bringing the Swazi state under European control, the protocol did not resolve one of the sticky points in the establishment of European colonialism in Swaziland: the Anglo-Transvaal struggle for supremacy over Swaziland or what De Winton has termed a state of "imperium in imperio." The condition of "imperium in imperio" was only resolved through the barrel of a gun in the South African War, 1899-1902, a war mainly fought between the British and the Transvaal Republic over the Anglo-Transvaal long drawn-out struggle for supremacy in the Transvaal. The role of the emaSwati in this war is discussed elsewhere in this study.⁸⁰ Suffice it here to mention that the British defeat of the Transvaal in this war led to the end of the Transvaal government's involvement in the affairs of Swaziland. In this way, the condition of an "imperium in imperio" came to an end. From 1902 onward, the British had to deal directly with the emaSwati. The Swazi rulers for their part, were in for a big surprise, because for a long time they had perceived the British as their protectors against the

⁷⁹Simelane, "Swazi Resistance," 141. Even Matsebula notwithstanding his shortcomings as a historian, has noted that the 1898 Protocol to the 1894 Anglo-Transvaal Convention had converted Bhunu's status from that of a king to that of a 'paramount chief' and made him a mere subject "like his people," of the Transvaal authority in Swaziland. See Matsebula, *History*, p. 167.

⁸⁰See chapter seven below.

Transvaal Boers whom they viewed as an intrusive colonial force and a very harsh power.

From 1894 to the outbreak of the South African War in October 1899, the main contestation of power in Swaziland was between the Swazi monarchy and the Transvaal administration. With the Transvaal government gone from the Swaziland political landscape, the British government replaced the Transvaal as a new colonial power in Swaziland in 1903. Thus, from 1903 until 1968 contestation of power in Swaziland was between the Swazi monarchy and the British colonial state.

After the Sibandze incident, Bhunu got on the back of his people to make money from their labor just like European labor recruitment agents were doing for the mining companies in the Transvaal. On May 3, 1899 he and Labotsibeni entered into an agreement with Matthias Johannes Jacobus Grobler to provide him with Swazi labor for a fifteen-year unbroken period under the following terms and conditions: Bhunu undertook to supply Grobler or his representative "on their demand within fourteen days as many sound, healthy Swazies approximately between the ages of 17 and 45 years as possible (in no case however less than 50 upon each demand."⁸¹ Grobler, for his part, committed himself to:

convey and employ the Swazies to the general labour Agencies, mining companies and such like at his own expense including pass money. (And moreover shall pay to me [Bhunu] the sum of 10/- shillings per Swazie so delivered by me to him[.]) Any overplus over and above the aforesaid disbursements arising out of this transaction may be appropriated and kept by the said Matthias Johannes Jacobus Grobler to cover his own expenses.⁸²

⁸¹Translation copy of Power of Attorney signed by Bhunu, Labotsibeni and other two Swazi councillors, and Chris Botha and H. de Jager, 3rd May 1899 (File No. S. 7A, SNA).

⁸²*Ibid.*

Bhunu further undertook not to grant permission for recruitment or conveyance of Swazi labor from Swaziland or for employing them anywhere to any person.⁸³

This contract was expected to convert Swaziland into a labor catchment area for labor in the Transvaal and other mining and industrial areas in South Africa. But the outbreak of the South African War in October 1899 delayed its implementation. However, the importance of the signing of such a contract by the Swazi leaders was that it coopted them as an arm of the colonial state in its efforts to recruit Swazi labor. At the same time, this arrangement open a niche for the Swazi paramount chieftaincy to enrich itself from selling the labor of its subjects. This was indeed a dramatic turn of events from the Swazi precolonial days, when men were required to occasionally provide labor to the Swazi monarchy, in such economic activities as plowing the fields and hunting. Now, with the colonial establishment in place with its demands for labor of the colonized, the Swazi Paramount Chieftaincy turned around and made money for itself out of the labor of its subjects by entering into labor contract system with European labor recruiters. By so doing, the Swazi Paramount Chieftaincy had entered a capitalist mode of thinking with regard to its subjects. Now, it attached monetary valued, in the European sense of cash money, to the labor of young men of its subjects.⁸⁴ This new position of the Swazi

⁸³*Ibid.*

⁸⁴For an insightful discussion of the commercialization of labor of the African working class under colonial conditions in general, see George C. Bond, "Religion, Ideology, and Property in Northern Zambia," in Irving Leonard Markovitz, ed., Studies in Power and Class in Africa (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp.170-188.

paramount chieftaincy within a colonial state confirms what has long been observed by imperial historians and scholars of power elsewhere in Africa, that the harshness of colonial rule did not affect colonized people in the same manner. Some of the colonized people were privileged by a colonial state.⁸⁵ For our case, the Swazi paramount chieftaincy remained a privileged aristocracy within a colonized Swazi society.

Summary

In this chapter I have traced the Swazi queens' attempts to hold their ground against European colonialism. One of the ways in which they did this was to expel Shepstone from his official position as the Resident Advisor and Agent of the Swazi Nation. They perceived him as having undermined the Swazi independence by signing the Organic Proclamation to the Anglo-Transvaal Convention of 1890. By signing such a Convention, Shepstone had in fact falsified the Swazi leaders' consent to the establishment of Transvaal's colonial administration in Swaziland. However, the foundation for colonial rule was already laid down by the time the Swazi Queen Regent Tibati and Queen Mother Labotsibeni expelled Shepstone. In spite of their terminating his services, they had been unable to reverse the Anglo-Transvaal colonial advance. Another step the Swazi queens took in order to hold their ground was to hire two British lawyers, Hulett and Langston as their Secretaries. I have discussed the manner in which

⁸⁵See D.A. Low, "Lion Rampant," Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, II, 3 (November 1964), 235-252. See also his book into which this paper was reworked, Lion Rampant: Essays in the Study of British Imperialism (London: Frank Cass, 1973), and Irving Leonard Markovitz, "Introduction: Continuities in the Study of Power and Class in Africa," in Irving Leonard Markovitz, ed., Studies in Power and Class in Africa (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 3-19.

these lawyers attempted to expose to Swazi rulers the real agenda of the British officials in Swaziland, namely to gradually prepare the ground for Anglo-Transvaal colonial rule. These lawyers even took the Swazi struggle for independence against the Anglo-Transvaal to the British Colonial Office in London. But, the colonial interests had been too firmly entrenched to be shaken by only two lawyers. Once these had stepped outside the borders of Swaziland, they were never allowed by the Anglo-Transvaal governments to return to the country.

I have shown how an incident of an execution of a Swazi chief *indvuna* and his two assistants was used by the Transvaal government to attempt to refashion its power relations with the Swazi leadership. After a long and protracted diplomatic maneuver between the governments of the Transvaal and Britain an 1898 Protocol to the 1894 Convention was signed by the two governments. This Protocol was the last straw to remove any lingering doubts from all concerned in the Swazi-Anglo-Boer relations in Swaziland with regard to the ascendancy of European colonial rule in the country. Thereafter, the Swazi leaders were left with no illusions about their loss of power, for now they became subjects of the Transvaal colonial state and could be brought to its court of law should they transgress the laws of the country.

The Transvaal colonial administration in Swaziland was only terminated by the outbreak of the South African War in October 1899. This war was mainly fought between the British on one side, and the Transvaal and Orange Free State Boers on the other. The emaSwati entered the war on the British side. In the next chapter I explore the reasons for the emaSwati's involvement in that war and its effect on power relations.

Chapter Seven

THE ROLE OF THE EMASWATI IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR, 1899-1902 AND THE IMPACT OF THIS WAR ON THE AFFAIRS OF SWAZILAND

When the South African War broke out between the governments of Great Britain and the Transvaal over issues in the Transvaal Republic, the Swazi leaders were still bitter about the Transvaal's colonial rule in their country. Thus the Swazi leaders saw in this war an opportunity to settle old scores against the Transvaal Boers in Swaziland. But, Paramount Chief Bhunu suddenly died in December 1899, immediately after the outbreak of the war in October 1899. Labotsibeni became queen regent holding the throne of the Swazi paramount chief for her four month old grandson Nkhotfotjeni, who assumed the position of the Paramount Chief of the emaSwati as Sobhuza II in 1921.¹ Thus, she became responsible for deciding whether or not the emaSwati remain neutral in this war.

This chapter examines the role played by the emaSwati in the South African War, 1899 to 1902. The involvement of the emaSwati in this war was a major contributory factor in the defeat of the Boers by the British in Swaziland. This chapter argues that the emaSwati entered the war on the British side with a specific agenda, namely to expel the Boers from their country in order to regain their independence, to benefit from the spoils of the war by capturing livestock from the Boers; others hoped to earn good rewards from

¹Sobhuza II is popularly known in the scholarship of Swaziland as King Sobhuza II of Swaziland. But, this has been a misnomer, for Swaziland was a British colony when Sobhuza attained his majority in 1921. It is accurate to refer to him as King of Swaziland only from 1968 when Swaziland became independent from British colonial rule.

the British for whom they fought and gathered intelligence as scouts. It should be recalled that the emaSwati royalists had contested the Boer authority in Swaziland as recently as 1894 when the Anglo-Transvaal alliance established a protectorate to be administered by the South African Republic. The emaSwati viewed the outbreak of the South African War as an opportunity to settle old scores with the Boers.

The extent to which the emaSwati took part suggests a need to rethink the scope and range of this war in southern Africa. The exclusion of the emaSwati and the black South Africans from the Peace Treaty of Vereeniging in May 1902, which was signed by the British and the Boers, has long obscured the diversity of combatants in this war. By exploring the different theaters and the issues involved on each front, we can overcome the scholarly limitations in our understanding of the nature of this war and the issues involved. This chapter makes a further contribution to the growing literature on Africans' involvement.² Swaziland has a history of providing the manpower for British imperialism in South Africa, for example through their military alliance with the British

²A pioneering work on Africans' role in the war is Donald Denoon, "Participation in the 'Boer War': People's War, People's Non-War, Or Non-People's War?" in Bethwell A. Ogot, ed., War and Society in Africa (London: Frank Cass, 1972), pp. 109-122. Warwick's work is seminal on this subject: see Peter Warwick, Black People and the South African War, 1899-1902 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983). See a collection of essays in Peter Warwick and S.B. Spies, eds., The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902 (London: Longman, 1980), W.R. Nasson, "'Doing down their Master': Africans, Boers, and Treason in the Cape Colony during the South African War of 1899-1902," Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, XII, 1 (October 1983), 29-53, and W.R. Nasson, "Moving Lord Kitchener: Black Military Transport and Supply Work in the South African War, 1899-1902, with particular reference to the Cape Colony," Journal of Southern African Studies, 11, 1 (October 1984), 25-51. See also footnote 6 below for further citations.

against the BaPedi in 1879. Yet the extent to which Swaziland has contributed to the shaping of the South African past remains a little - known aspect of Swaziland and South African historiography.

The Swazi Weigh Stakes in the South African War

The emaSwati never accepted the establishment of the Transvaal Administration in Swaziland by Britain and the Transvaal in 1894. A year later King Bhunu was reported to have vowed that "he would never on any account agree to [the Transvaal administration] being established in his country."³ The emaSwati leaders only grudgingly acquiesced in the Transvaal administration. In fact, from 1894, the era of King Bhunu and Queen Mother Labotsibeni was characterized by their attempts to get rid of Boer administration from Swaziland. Among many grievances they had against the Boers were the latter's denial of justice to the emaSwati, violation of Article II of the Anglo-Transvaal Convention of 1894, which protected the rights of the emaSwati rulers against Boer encroachment and interference in Swazi affairs, and accusations of flogging by Boer officials.⁴ In their sum, these grievances were an aspect of emaSwati resistance to the

³Letter from J. Stuart, Acting British Consul, Bremersdorp, Swaziland, to the High Commissioner, Cape Town, April 24, 1895, Enclosure 2, African No. 499, Further Correspondence Relative to the Affairs of Swaziland (Colonial Office, 1895), p. 2.

⁴Hamilton Sipho Simelane, "Swazi Resistance to Boer Penetration and Domination, 1881-1898," Transafrican Journal of History, 18 (1989), 134. On flogging by Boer officials, see also an accusation made on a certain Abel Erasmus, a Transvaal tax collector, for his trashing of the emaSwati. See Statement of George Hutchinson with Allister M. Miller as witness, annexure K, in Sir F. De Winton, "Report on Swaziland," in Command Paper 6201 (London: HMS, 1890), pp. 78-79.

establishment of Boer colonial rule in Swaziland. When the South African War broke out in October 1899, the emaSwati leaders were still negotiating a replacement of the Transvaal administration with British protectorate rule.

In a more general sense, the act of war means different things to different people. Common among these are the refashioning of power relations among the combatants and allies both during and after the war; the acquisition of wealth in the shape of booty and reparations or indemnity; and the redrawing of state boundaries and even the creation of new states. During the 1880s the independence of the Swazi state was guaranteed by Britain and the Transvaal largely owing to the emaSwati's alliance with them against the BaPedi kingdom in 1876 and 1879. Some of these general features of war were applicable in Swaziland during the South African War in 1899 - 1902.

There were a considerable number of Europeans (British and Boers) living in Swaziland by the time the South African War broke out. Many of them had come to Swaziland during the era of mineral and grazing concessions in the early 1880s.⁵ As rumors of the coming war became intense, whites in Swaziland repositioned themselves. Some considered South African burghers (citizens) under Article 8 of the Convention of 1894, which established Transvaal Boer administration in Swaziland, reclassified themselves as British subjects by taking an oath of allegiance to the British Queen through the British Consul in Swaziland.⁶

⁵See Philip Bonner, Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires: The evolution and dissolution of the nineteenth-century Swazi state (Ravan: Johannesburg, 1983).

⁶J. Smuts's (H.M.'s Consul in Swaziland) confidential letter to the High Commissioner,

However, like everywhere in southern Africa, the British and the Boers in Swaziland supposedly wanted an exclusively "white man's war," at least in theory, by excluding Africans and other groups from even discussing or commenting on it.⁷ On 27 June 1899, when J. Smuts, the British Consul in Swaziland, visited both the Swazi King Bhunu, now retitled Paramount Chief, at Ngabezweni and the Queen Mother Labotsibeni at Zombodze, their separate residences, he was asked by Labotsibeni whether Britain was at peace.⁸ Queen Mother Labotsibeni also asked Smuts: "if the Boers are so widemouthed and say the English are cowards why don't you fight them?"⁹ Smuts told her that the current situation between the British and the Boers was neither her "*indaba*" (affair), nor that of the emaSwati, and thus there was no need for him or the emaSwati to

13 September 1899, in Confidential Despatches and Telegrams, British Consul, 1897-1899, File No. S. 14 D, Swaziland National Archives hereafter referred to as SNA.

⁷See for example Solomon Tshekisho Plaatjie (edited and introduced by Brian Willan), Native Life in South Africa (London: Longman, 1916, reprinted 1989), chapter 18; Warwick, Black People, chapter 1; Iain R. Smith, "The Origins of the South African War (1899-1902): A Re-Appraisal," South African Historical Journal, 22 (1990), 24-60; Bill Nasson (Review Essay), "Warriors Without Spears: Africans in the South African War, 1899-1902," Social Dynamics, 9, 1 (1983), 91-94; R.F. Morton, "Linchwe I and the Kgatla Campaign in the South African War, 1899-1902," Journal of African History, 26 (1985), 169-191; Nasson, "Moving Lord Kitchener," Journal of Southern African Studies, 11, 1 (October 1984), 25-51; Mordechai Tamarkin, "Milner: the Cape Afrikaners, and the Outbreak of the South African War: From a Point of Return to a Dead End," Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, XXV, 3 (September 1997), 392-414, and Jeremy Krikler, "Agrarian class struggle and the South African War," Social History, 14, 2 (May 1989), 151-176.

⁸J. Smuts, British Consul in Swaziland, confidential letter to the High Commissioner, 28th June 1899, in Confidential Despatches and Telegrams, British Consul, 1897-1899, SNA.

⁹Smuts' confidential letter to the High Commissioner, 28 June 1899, in *ibid.*

discuss it. And with a typically paternalistic colonial attitude, he added, "H. M. [Her Majesty's] Govt. will be annoyed to hear you made a remark of that kind though your tone was not serious. All the Swazis have to do is to keep quiet. If you want news you can send to me and if I have any I can give you I shall do so."¹⁰

Thus, neither Labotsibeni nor Smuts talked about the emaSwati's position in the event of a war between the British and the Boers. Labotsibeni, on her part, might have resorted to a time-honored Swazi strategy to "give a bulldog a bone to chew then proceed to manuvre [sic] until you are established" or "lie down when a bulldog charges."¹¹ Smuts, for his part, had avoided the issue because he thought he "might thereby suggest what was not present to her mind. I also thought it well not to question her as to who were the boers [sic] who had spoken disparagingly of us [the British] but I think it is likely some of them had done so."¹² Herein lies an example of what one scholar has referred to as colonialists' tendency to perceive indigenous people as mere objects or victims of the colonial enterprise, who did not influence the colonial settlement.¹³ Smuts was deceiving himself by thinking that the emaSwati were not evaluating their position in the event of a war. Later Smuts heard from a storekeeper who was in touch with the

¹⁰ Quoted in *ibid.*

¹¹ Quoted in Arthur Mag. Dlamini, "Expansion and Survival Policy of the Swazi Nation," unpublished paper (University of Swaziland, Special Collection, n.d.), p. 2.

¹² Smuts to the High Commissioner, 28 June 1899, in SNA.

¹³ Ran Greenstein, "Rethinking the Colonial Process: The Role of Indigenous Capacities in Comparative Historical Inquiry," South African Historical Journal, 32 (May 1995), 115.

emaSwati that the latter thought the British were afraid of the Boers.¹⁴

When informing Labotsibeni that the Anglo-Boer pre-war negotiations were exclusively a "white man's affair," Smuts neglected to tell her as well that during the negotiations from 30 May to 6 June 1899, President Paul Kruger had revived old ambitions, when he proposed that Transvaal be given complete control of Swaziland in exchange for a Reform Bill in Transvaal.¹⁵ This was sufficient reason for Labotsibeni to be informed of Anglo-Boer negotiations, since Swaziland was suggested as an item for bargaining between the Boers and the British!

This conversation between Labotsibeni and Smuts points in various directions: first, Labotsibeni was better-informed than King Bhunu in matters of state and deeply concerned with them, for it was she who questioned Smuts on Anglo-Boer relations. Second, this demonstrates that contrary to British wishes that the Anglo-Boer situation in the Transvaal should be exclusively a "white man's affair," Africans followed the pre-war negotiations with interest. For instance, besides Labotsibeni's concern, in Bechuanaland regular meetings between a British magistrate and local chiefs were held at Mafeking to

¹⁴Smuts to the High Commissioner, 28th June 1899.

¹⁵Thomas Pakenham, The Boer War (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979, 1997 edition), p. 67. For a discussion of the Transvaal's old ambition to possess Swaziland for strategic reasons as a corridor to Delagoa Bay on the east coast, see Noel George Garson, "The Swaziland Question and a Road to the Sea, 1887-1895," Archives Year Book for South African History, Vol. II (Pretoria: Government Printers, 1957), 267-434. Swaziland and the Transvaal share a peculiar history, in that on occasions of strained Anglo-Transvaal relations, Swaziland was always brought up as a pawn through which to ease tensions. See, for example, Denys Rhodie, Conspirators in Conflict: A Study of the Johannesburg Reform Committee and its role in the conspiracy against the South African Republic (Cape Town: Tafelberg-Uitgewers, 1967), p. 15.

consider matters of armament and defense for the BaTswana against a possible Boer attack. At one such meeting Chief Motshegare of the Barolong told a British magistrate that, "until you can satisfy me that Her Majesty's white troops are impervious to bullets, I am going to defend my own wife and children. I have got my rifle at home and all I want is ammunition."¹⁶ Chief Motshegare had an old bullet scar from the Barolong-Boer war before Britain took over Bechuanaland; BaTswana society was preparing to fight in the upcoming war to defend its own interests rather than fighting for the British cause. For Motshegare the coming war would provide an opportunity for revenge upon the Boers.

The Boer Republics (Transvaal and the Orange Free State) had maintained an uneasy co-existence with their neighboring African polities, while the latter generally perceived the Boer "native policy" to be harsh.¹⁷ The emaSwati resented the way the Transvaal Republic's administration imposed taxes on them, beginning in 1898. Thus, there is no wonder that when in November 1899 Schalk Burger, a Transvaal burgher, asked Paramount Chief Bhunu to provide him with 100 Swazi porters, Bhunu declined by pointing out that Transvaal taxation had forced his men to the labor market and therefore

¹⁶Quoted in Plaatjie, Native Life in South Africa, p. 192.

¹⁷For a discussion of the Boer 'native policy' see J.A.I. Agar-Hamilton, The Native policy of the Voortrekkers: An essay in the history of the interior of South Africa, 1836-1858 (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1928), and C.H. Thomas, Origin of the Anglo-Boer War Revealed: The Conspiracy of the 19th Century Unmasked, Second edition (London: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.), pp. 166-171. For Cape Colony's Africans' anti-Boer sentiment, see Nasson, "Doing down their Masters," Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, XII, 1 (October 1983), 29-53.

he did not have any for Burger.¹⁸ The extent of the emaSwati's grudge against the Boers was indicated when John Gama told Smuts he thought that if war broke out between the British and the Boers, it would mean "an assegai for each boer [sic] unless the Swazis [were] very firmly forbidden to take part in the matter."¹⁹ Other observers have noticed the emaSwati hatred and fear of the Boers as recently as the late 1880s. Such observers had pointed out that should Swaziland come under the Transvaal control, the emaSwati would resort to arms in order to challenge the Boer authority.²⁰ These statements turned out to be a realistic assessment of the emaSwati's attitude toward the Boers, as will be seen below.

When the South African War began in October 1899, J.C. Krogh, the Swaziland Special Commissioner for the Transvaal Government, turned over the reins of the country to King Bhunu and Queen Mother Labotsibeni. In an ingenious way, however, the Transvaal indicated that the restoration of independence was a temporary measure and that the Transvaal still retained overlordship in the affairs of Swaziland. A letter written by the Commandant-General, Piet Joubert, in which the Transvaal recognized King

¹⁸Warwick, Black People, p. 106.

¹⁹Smuts's confidential letter to the High Commissioner, 13th September 1899, in Confidential Despatches and Telegraphs, British Consul, 1897-1899, File No. S. 14 D, SNA. Gama was a Swazi whom the British officials in Swaziland considered a reliable informant on Swazi affairs.

²⁰See Statement of Walter Carter, Embekelweni, 3rd December 1889, with Allister Miller as witness, in annexure K of De Winton, "Report on Swaziland," p. 79, and also Statement of Harold Wheeler, Embekelweni, 4th December 1889, with Allister Miller as witness, in annexure K in *ibid.*, p. 80.

Bhunu as the supreme political authority in Swaziland for the duration of the war, stated:

you Bunu, are the only person who, *as long as the war lasts*, has power in Swaziland over everything. For so long you can do as you like, and it would be very good if *you guarded and took care of every house and work, so that no damage is done*...you can tell all the remaining whites to go. If any woman, child or defenceless person, black or white, is injured or marauded, [the] South African Republic Government will be dissatisfied."²¹

Although this letter purported to restore emaSwati independence, it was in fact a Boer attempt to induce the emaSwati to remain neutral in the war and to make them responsible for protection of the late Boer Administration's and Boer civilians' properties and those whites who could not leave Swaziland either because of age, physical conditions or for other reasons .

It should be recalled that by this time concessions, which had been ratified by the court of law established by Britain and Transvaal in 1890, had established a foothold for Europeans in Swaziland.²² Thus, through this decision, Europeans had acquired ownership of immovable goods or resources in Swaziland. Both the British and Boer settlers aimed to return to Swaziland after the war. Thus, it was important for them or their governments to make sure that their properties were if possible protected during the war. In fact, many of them did apply for return to Swaziland and for compensation for losses incurred during the war.²³ The British authorities made land ownership or some

²¹Quoted in Warwick, *Black People*, p. 106. Emphasis added.

²²For a discussion of the establishment of the concession court see Manelisi Genge, "Law and the Imposition of Colonial Rule in Swaziland, 1890-1898" (M.A. Thesis: Ohio University, November 1992), pp. 78-82. For concessions see Bonner, *Kings*, chapter 10.

²³For Boer applications for permits to return to Swaziland, see the following files in SNA:

interests in Swaziland important qualifications when considering Europeans' applications for return to Swaziland after the war.²⁴ Therefore, the handing over of political control of the country to the emaSwati leaders was, from the Anglo-Transvaal view, a way to avoid anarchy in Swaziland following the withdrawal of the Transvaal Administration and to ensure the protection of the properties of their subjects. As elsewhere during this war, the British were also concerned about the maintenance of law and order.²⁵ But immediately after the war had ended, British officials in Swaziland and South Africa were positioning themselves for an eventual British takeover of Swaziland, and by so doing, to end the emaSwati's days of war-time independence. As early as 1902, one British official confidentially wrote "it wont [sic] do for the Swazis to know there is a chance of their being in a temporary state of independence."²⁶

Of course, since the advent of Europeans in the interior of southern Africa, the

J154/02; J243/02; J166/02; J221/02; SCS 257/02; SCS 592/02, and SCS 878/03. For Boers or Burghers, as they were referred to, who returned to Swaziland without permission, see files J118/02; and SCS 196/03. For claims for compensation for war losses for both the British and Burghers/Boers, see files SCS 254/03; SCS 941/03; SCS 575/02; SCS 549/02 and SCS 242/03. For applications for grant of relief to certain Burghers who returned to Swaziland after the war, see file J236/05.

²⁴Minute Paper, D. Honey, Secretary for Native Affairs, Swaziland, to W.H. Moor, Assistant Colonial Secretary, May 12, 1902, file J243/02, SNA. See also a copy of a letter, E.H.M. Legget, Major R.E., Director of Burgher Camps Department, Pretoria, to The Colonial Secretary, Pretoria, 28th November, 1902, J243/02, SNA.

²⁵See, for instance, Nasson, "Doing down their Masters," Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, XII, 1 (October 1983), 31, and for Bechuanaland, see Plaatjie, Native Life, p. 188.

²⁶Confidential letter, Sir Godfrey Y. Lagden, Special Commissioner for Native Affairs to Sir Neville Lyttleton, G.O.C. Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, June 30th, 1902,

emaSwati leaders had realized that they could not remain independent without some sort of cooperation with Europeans or of European 'protection'. For example, as early as 1846 the emaSwati had formed an offensive and defensive alliance with the Boers in the eastern Transvaal. They had 'collaborated' with the Boers as well as with the British in colonial wars against the BaPedi during the latter half of the nineteenth-century.²⁷

Transvaal Boer support had been crucial in checking internal jealousies within the royal family during succession struggles, for example at the time of the coronations of Kings Mswati and Mbandzeni. The emaSwati leaders also had sought a European, Theophilus Shepstone, Jr., from the British Government of the Natal Colony to act as their agent in dealings with European mineral and land-grazing concessionaires in the 1880s.²⁸ Thus, it is not accurate to state that "the Swazi leaders did not quite understand what protection meant," when they pleaded for British 'protection'.²⁹ One would rather argue that the

J58/02, SNA.

²⁷For the British and Boer destruction of the BaPedi polity, see Peter Delius, The Land Belongs To Us: The Pedi Polity, the Boers and the British in the Nineteenth-Century Transvaal (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983). For the role of the emaSwati in this destruction, see Manelisi Genge, "The Role of the AmaSwazi in the Destruction of the BaPedi State, 1876-1879" (Seminar Paper in African History, Michigan State University, Fall Semester 1993), pp. 1-30.

²⁸James Wycliffe Headlam, ed., Materials for the History of South Africa, 1890-1895: Being Selections From the Private and Official Correspondence of Lord Loch, Vol. II (London: Spottiswoode, 1898), p. 2; Bonner, Kings, chapter 5; J.S.M. Matsebula, A History of Swaziland (Cape Town: Longman, 1987 edition), chapter 8, and W.J. Leyds, The Transvaal Surrounded: A Continuation of 'The First Annexation of the Transvaal' (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1919), chapter XXXIV.

²⁹Josiah B. Mlahagwa, "Capital, Class and State in Colonial Swaziland: The Hegemony of Capital and the Demise of Dlamini Power," Research Paper Submitted to the

concept of 'protection' had different connotations for the Swazi leaders and British government.

War and the Swazi Participation

The heightened Anglo-Boer tension in the Transvaal prompted the British and the Boers on October 4th, 1899 to instruct their subjects to leave Swaziland, or to remain at their own risk. However, burghers who were liable to be enlisted in active service were allowed to remain in Swaziland.³⁰ Thus the war marked a temporary suspension of European colonialism in the form of the Transvaal Administration in Swaziland. Contrary to previous scholarly assessments which portray the emaSwati as non-participants in the South African War, in this chapter I demonstrate that the emaSwati were indeed actively involved as combatants in this war, and their participation throws light on Swazi-Anglo-Boer relations during both and after the war.³¹ The emaSwati had always 'collaborated' with Europeans in the wars in which the latter were involved in the interior of what later emerged as South Africa. In the past, the emaSwati had used their involvement in such wars as a bargaining tool for entering into dealings with Europeans.

International Development Research Center, Nairobi, April 1982, p. 7. (A copy of this paper is available at the University of Swaziland, Library, Special Collection.)

³⁰Government Notice issued to all white inhabitants in Swaziland by J.C. Krogh, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, 4th October, 1899, J180/03, SNA.

³¹For the neutrality view see Matsebula, History, p. 172, and Warwick, Black People, p. 108. Crush has uncritically accepted Matsebula's and Warwick's views of the emaSwati's neutrality. See Jonathan Crush, The Struggle for Swazi Labour, 1890-1920 (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), p. 48.

Therefore, when the South African War broke out, the choice for the emaSwati rulers was not whether to be neutral or not, but which side to join. Until the outbreak of this war, there was no Swazi precedent of taking sides in a war in which the main belligerents were Europeans; since the Anglo-Transvaal Convention of 1890, which put Swaziland on the road to colonization, the emaSwati's diplomatic strategy of playing the British against the Transvaalers had been rendered ineffective.³²

Paramount Chief Bhunu did not live to see the war. He died in December 1899, before the emaSwati became actively involved. His successor was his infant son, Nkhotfotjeni alias Mona who became known as Sobhuza II. Queen Mother Labotsibeni became Queen Regent during Sobhuza's minority. Thus she effectively became the head of state to whom British and Boers communicated their views regarding the progress of the war in Swaziland.

After hearing about the news of Bhunu's death Krogh offered ten head of cattle as an indication of sympathy to the royal family. However, since there was no precedent for an action like Krogh's with regard to the deaths of previous kings, and coupled with Labotsibeni's suspicion of the hidden motives behind Krogh's present, Labotsibeni refused to accept the gift.³³ This demonstrates Labotsibeni's carefulness in her dealings

³²For a discussion of this, see Genge, "Law," pp. 68-78. For the emaSwati's strategy of playing the British against the Transvaalers or vice versa, see Headlam, ed. Materials, p. 10.

³³Confidential letter from T.Y. Gibson, Resident Magistrate, Ndwandwe, Nongoma (Natal), to the Chief Magistrate and Civil Commissioner, Eshowe (Natal), March 26, 1900 (File No. J31/02, SNA).

with Europeans and her self-consciousness to avoid a similar disaster which had befallen her husband, the late King Mbandzeni, who was presented with all sorts of imaginable gifts by European concessionaires, who later claimed concessions on the basis of such presents. Labotsibeni had continued to display an unparalleled astuteness and prudence in the history of queen mothers and queen regents during her dealings with Europeans in Swaziland until her retirement from active politics in 1921.³⁴

According to the Resident Magistrate T.Y. Gibson's confidential version of the story, which he claimed to have been Labotsibeni's account to him of Bhunu's death, the Paramount Chief was murdered by a man, whose father had been killed in Swaziland. Therefore the son of the dead man left Swaziland for an unspecified country. Then upon his return to Swaziland he became one of the close attendants of Paramount Chief Bhunu. This closeness to the Paramount Chief had therefore provided this man with an opportunity to avenge his father's death by murdering Bhunu.³⁵ Whatever one makes of Gibson's account, the death of Bhunu has remained shrouded in mystery in the history of Swaziland. Gibson himself confirmed this when he wrote, "it appears to be the general impression amongst the Swazies, which I consider is strongly confirmed by the account of the matter given by the Queen Mother, that she is in some way responsible for the late

³⁴For Labotsibeni's encounters with the British colonial state in early twentieth-century Swaziland, see chapter eight below.

³⁵Gibson to the Chief Magistrate and Civil Commissioner, Eshowe, March 26, 1900 (J31/02).

king's death."³⁶ However, a Swazi historian, Matsebula, and Hilda Kuper claim that Bhunu had collapsed while he was being doctored, i.e., treated with 'traditional' ritual medicine from the Swazi specialists of the rituals for the *Incwala* ceremony.³⁷ Therefore, an allegation of Labotsibeni's hand in Bhunu's death, as suggested by Gibson above, still remains unproven.

When war broke out, Swaziland had just emerged from the rinderpest epidemic of 1896–97, which had killed many Swazi cattle and drastically disordered their economy. The coming of Anglo-Boer administration to Swaziland in the early 1890s had put an end to the emaSwati's traditional cattle-raiding activities.³⁸ Withdrawal of Boer administration at the outbreak of the war provided the emaSwati rulers with an opportunity to rebuild their stock through raiding. This had significant ramifications for the disposition of wealth and power in internal Swazi politics. Cattle wealth was central

³⁶*Ibid.*

³⁷Matsebula, *History*, p.169, and Hilda Kuper, *Sobhuza II. Ngwenyam and King of Swaziland: The story of an hereditary ruler and his people* (London: Duckworth, 1978), p. 30. A caveat is in order here lest readers assume that these are two independent authorities on this point. Matsebula and Kuper use the exact wording and sequence of sentences on their account of this event and do not cite any source for their data. Whether one can assume this is coincidence or plagiarism, I leave it to other readers to decide. However, their account of the circumstances pertaining to Bhunu's death must be considered as one and not two different versions.

³⁸Randall M. Packard, "Maize, Cattle and Mosquitoes: The Political Economy of Malaria Epidemics in Colonial Swaziland," in John Daniel and Michael F. Stephen, eds., *Historical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Swaziland: Selected Articles* (Social Science Research Unit: University of Swaziland, 1986), p. 84. For a discussion of the impact of the rinderpest epidemic in southern Africa, see Pule Phoofolo, "Epidemics and Revolutions: The Rinderpest Epidemic in late Nineteenth-Century Southern Africa," *Past & Present*, No. 138 (February 1993), pp. 112-143.

to royal power, for, among other uses, Swazi royalists used cattle to maintain client relations with their subjects by "*sis*a," that is, placing out cattle among them; they also slaughtered cattle for their subjects during royal rituals. Thus the personal political interests of the Swazi royals, including Queen Regent Labotsibeni, were at stake as they made diplomatic decisions regarding emaSwati participation in the war.

In the letter in which the Transvaal purportedly returned power to the emaSwati rulers, Commandant-General Joubert had reminded Bhunu of old Boer traditions of making Swazi kings (such as Mbandzeni), of protecting the emaSwati against the amaZulu, and of their peaceful co-existence with the emaSwati. Joubert promised moreover that the Boers would not use Swaziland as a battlefield in their fight against the British.³⁹ But the emaSwati rulers were obviously dissatisfied with the Boer administration by the time war broke out; mere words of neutrality were not sufficient to the emaSwati for whom war "threw up its own opportunities."⁴⁰

The British, for their part, made use of the emaSwati services in so many ways that emaSwati neutrality became a farce. The emaSwati provided valuable services to the British by feeding them and engaging as scouts. During the early phase of the war Lord Kitchener, Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces in South Africa, had asked Labotsibeni to send her men to guard the Amsterdam Border against Boer infiltration.

³⁹Quoted in Warwick, *Black People*, p. 106.

⁴⁰Crush, *Struggle*, p. 47. For opportunities created by this war for Africans elsewhere, see Nasson, "Moving Lord Kitchener," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 11, 1 (October 1984), 25-51. For a discussion of the emaSwati's dissatisfaction with Boer administration see Simelane, "Swazi Resistance," *Transafrica Journal of History*, 18 (1989), 117-146.

But Labotsibeni refused to do so by saying that she had no men to despatch to the border.⁴¹ Of course, she neglected to inform him that her *emabutfo* (armies) were, since early 1900, engaged in a purge directed against those who were perceived to be either against the rule of the monarchy or alleged to be spying on her activities for whites.⁴² In this sense, Labotsibeni had engaged the Swazi army in her attempts to revive the authority and power of the Swazi royal family. Then Kitchener turned to Chief Mavela Nkosi whom he asked personally at an interview in Pretoria "to employ Scouts, and work along the Amsterdam Border in conjunction with our [British] troops, promising a good reward."⁴³ Kitchener told Mavela to use his own Swazi men and he gave him six rifles.

⁴¹Letter, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, Mbabane, to The Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, 2nd January 1903, SCS 612B/03, SNA, and a copy of a letter signed by Benjamin Nxumalo and Mavela Nkosi, to The Special Commissioner, 28 October 1902, J14/03, SNA. See also a letter, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, Mbabane, to The Assistant Secretary, Swaziland Affairs, 3rd March 1903, SCS 612B/03, SNA.

⁴²For more information on this see, Statement by John A. Major, attached to a letter from J.A. Lawson, Captain, S.H., Komartpoort, to Captain Gardyne, Adj. S.H. Headquarter Office, Barberton, 11 March 1902. See also a letter from John A. Major, Lebombo, to A.C. Ross, British Consul Lourenco Marques, April 2nd, 1900; a reply letter from Y.R. Luke, Acting-Vice Consul, British Consulate, Lourenco Marques, April 15, 1900; Mahleke Statement from Lebombo; Statement by Indabaningi; letter from John A. Major, East Lebombo, Portuguese Territory, to N.B.M. (British) Consul, Delagoa Bay, 5th May 1900; reply letter from J.R. Luke, Acting-Vice Consul, British Consulate, Lourenco Marques, May 1900; Statement by Makalima; Magigenbanit Statement, and Ingagati's statement. All these are in J63/02, SNA.

⁴³Letter, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, Mbabane, to The Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, 2nd January 1903, SCS 612B/03, SNA and copy of letter signed by Benjamin Nxumalo and Mavela Nkosi, to The Special Commissioner, 28 October 1902, J14/03, SNA. See also a letter, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, Mbabane, to The Assistant Secretary, Swaziland Affairs, 3rd March 1903, SCS 612B/03, SNA.

Mavela was an influential chief in South Western Swaziland. Indeed, he organized thirty-two scouts including himself from his village and fed them at his own expense. (See in the footnote below the names of men whom Mavela assembled as scouts under his command, who are rarely mentioned in most historical accounts.⁴⁴)

Mavela also provided intelligence regarding the Boers to Colonel Colville and Major Godman of the British army. He handed over any Boer stock captured by his Swazi scouts to Colville. Colville paid Mavela thirty cattle, whereas Godman paid him in money for his services. He was also actively involved in A. M's forces at Chieveley before Colenso, which he joined in their march into the Transvaal.⁴⁵ He was acutely aware of

⁴⁴**They** were Benjamin Nxumalo, Luhlanga Nkosi, Insipi Nkosi, Mficila Nkosi, Vosila Nkosi, Christion Masiko, Scilem Gurbu, Malanga Nkosi, Songilwako Nkosi, Dins Fakude, Memo Hlatywako, Madevu Mota, Mhledwa Lukele, Jim Nkosi, Baleni Nkosi, Makonjwa Lukele, Myanda Ndimande, Madakwa Kambule, Shimgshimg Dlundlu, Zinga Tshabalala, Baleni Mdebele, Mtakati Mashuhu, Mgodoyi Simelane, Mafikishane Ngwenya, Gobolwane Mabizela, Stuurman Lukele, Londela Nkosi and Lobingaka Vilakazi. The names of the emaSwati scouts are here written as they appear in the original document, without change in spelling. List of Swazi Scouts included to a copy of a letter signed by Benjamin Nxumalo and Mavela Nkosi, to The Special Commissioner, 28 October 1902, attached to Commissioner for Native Affairs' letter to Sir Thomas Cunningham, 14th January, 1903, J14/03, SNA. For reference to Mavela as an influential chief, see copy of a letter from Thomas Cunningham, Staff Captain and late Intelligence Officer, Barberton District, to Sir Godfrey Lagden, Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, 17th January 1903, J14/03, SNA. For Mavela's claim for raising and feeding the Swazi scouts on his own expense, see an extract from notes of message brought by a Deputation sent by Swazi Queen Regent, to Enraght-Moony, attached to a letter from Enraght-Moony, to The OC, Intelligence Pretoria, 30th June, 1902, J14/03, SNA.

⁴⁵Copy of a letter from Thomas Cunningham, Staff Captain, late Intelligence Officer, Barberton District, to Sir Godfrey Lagden, Commissioner for Native Affairs, 17th January 1903, J14/03, SNA. For Mavela's involvement with H.M's forces, see a letter, Enraght-Moony, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, to The Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, 2nd January 1903, J14/03, SNA.

the tenuous position that resulted from his siding with the British in this war, and that he did not belong to the category of the emaSwati whom the British military officers accused of switching sides from the British to the Boers, and vice versa. He told a British commander "I have been consistently on the side of the English and on that account have been *hunted by the Boers in my own country*."⁴⁶ Thus, he paid a price for his involvement on the British side by being harassed by the Boers.

In 1903 the Special Commissioner vouched for Mavela's contribution to the British war effort when he said, "I believe that Mavela did good work & captured a number of Boers & a good deal of stock, which was handed over to various columns."⁴⁷ In the same breath the Commissioner also pointed out that Mavela's services on the British behalf made him vulnerable to the hostility of the Boers, who destroyed his village, household property, grain and horses, in revenge for British intelligence employees' crossing of the border. Mavela's village suffered from plundering of its stock by the British troops as well.⁴⁸ The Commissioner recommended that Mavela's

⁴⁶Extract from notes of message brought by a Deputation sent by Swazi Queen Regent, attached to a letter from Enraght-Moony, to The OC Intelligence Pretoria, 30th June 1902, J14/03, SNA. Emphasis added.

⁴⁷Letter, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, Mbabane, to The Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, 2nd January 1903, SCS 612B/03, SNA. See also a letter from Enraght-Moony, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, Mbabane, to The Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, 2nd January 1903, J14/03, SNA.

⁴⁸Letter, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, Mbabane, to The Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, 2nd January 1903, SCS 612B/03, SNA, and a letter, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, to The Assistant Secretary, Swaziland Affairs, 3rd March 1903, SCS 612B/03, SNA. See also copy of a letter from Thomas Cunningham, Staff Captain, late Intelligence Officer, Barberton District, to Sir Godfrey Lagden,

application for compensation be favorably considered, for, as he stated, "as far as I know the man [Mavela] appears to have done a lot of work under promise of reward, and if it is not recognized, he and the others will surely have reasonable grounds for charging us [British Military Authorities] with a breach of faith." Two months later the Special Commissioner for Swaziland F. Enraght-Moony expressed his support for Mavela's compensation, when he said "I think that it would be only reasonable to pay him the £50, *to close the incident*, as Sir Thomas Cunningham suggests."⁴⁹ Cunningham, for his part, **had** pointed out that the Intelligence Department in Pretoria was ready to pay Mavela £50 "*in order to bury the incident completely*."⁵⁰ Indeed, Mavela was finally paid £50 through the Department of Intelligence in Pretoria.⁵¹ In a sense, Cunningham's view had prevailed, for Mavela's crucial involvement in the South African War has remained obscure in Swazi historiography.

By 1903 Cunningham had paid Mavela £20 as compensation for his grain

Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, J14/03, SNA. For the British troops' taking of stock from Mavela's village, see a letter from Enraght-Moony, to The OC, Intelligence Pretoria, 30th June, 1902, J14/03, SNA.

⁴⁹Letter, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, Mbabane, to The Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, 2nd January 1903, SCS 612B/03, and a letter, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, to The Assistant Secretary, Swaziland Affairs, 3rd March 1903, SCS 612B/03, SNA, respectively. Emphasis added.

⁵⁰Copy of a letter, from Thomas Cunningham, Staff Captain, and late Intelligence Officer, Barberton District, to Sir Godfrey Lagden, Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, 17th January 1903, J14/03, SNA. Emphasis added.

⁵¹Letter, Staff Captain, for D.A.Q.M.G. - Intelligence, Pretoria, to The Special Commissioner for Swaziland, Mbabane, April 3rd, 1903, J14/03, SNA. See also letter, B.H. Warner, for Special Commissioner for Swaziland, Mbabane, to D.A.Q.M.G.,

destroyed by the Boers, and £20 for intelligence, which he sent to Cunningham.

However, when paying Mavela, Cunningham told him that he was doing so only on the grounds that Mavela should not lay any claim against the British government for the loss or destruction of his property by the Boers.⁵² Cunningham was trying to bury forever the fact that Mavela's village suffered from Boer attack during the war; Mavela's and his people's loss of property should be a forgotten fact of history. By so doing, Cunningham also buried from historical documentation the extent to which the emaSwati under Mavela's chieftaincy were affected by the South African War.

Until February 1902 Mavela received a sort of payment for his services directly from various military authorities. But from March 1902 onward Thomas Cunningham fixed Mavela's pay at £15 per month and it is significant that the British paid this to him through the office of Queen Regent Labotsibeni, whose Secretary was Josiah Vilakazi.⁵³ The British military authorities alleged that they had given a sum of £52-10 to Josiah Vilakazi to give to Labotsibeni, who was supposed to pay Mavela and his men for their services to the British. But Vilakazi denied that he ever received such money. On this, the Special Commissioner for Swaziland, speculated that the money was appropriated by Labotsibeni, lamenting that it was "a pity that these moneys were not paid directly to

Intelligence, Pretoria, 15th April 1903, J14/03, SNA.

⁵²Copy of a letter, Thomas Cunningham, Staff Captain, and late Intelligence Officer, Barberton District, to Sir Godfrey Lagden, Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, 17th January 1903, J14/03, SNA.

⁵³Copy of a letter, Thomas Cunningham, to Sir Godfrey Lagden, 17th January 1903, J14/03, SNA.

persons to whom they were due."⁵⁴ Whatever the reasons were for Cunningham to change an old procedure of paying Mavela directly for his services to the British military authorities, by channeling Mavela's pay through Labotsibeni he had in effect extended the involvement of the emaSwati in the war from individuals to Swazi leaders as well. The fact that Mavela and his scouts were paid through Labotsibeni gave her a strong degree of influence. This new arrangement also boosted the image of the Swazi royalists, who were revamping their power base from the effects of the late Boer administration in Swaziland, in the eyes of the emaSwati. From her decisive position in regulating the transfer of payments to emaSwati who aided the British, Labotsibeni could also build her personal reputation and power base at home and abroad.

The fact that Mavela was not alone in rendering services to the British, but was working with Swazi scouts, must be understood within the larger picture of the involvement of the emaSwati in the South African War. Their involvement was a significant contributory factor toward the British defeat of the Boers. Besides capturing Boer stock, Mavela's scouts guarded and patrolled the Amsterdam border and sent intelligence on the Boers to the nearest British columns or military bases.⁵⁵ Mavela and people in his village shouldered the economic burden of the war. By the end of the war Mavela claimed £1, 130 from the Special Commissioner for himself, his scout and for his

⁵⁴Letter, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, to The Assistant Secretary, Swaziland Affairs, 3rd March 1903, SCS 612B/03, SNA.

⁵⁵Copy of a letter, Benjamin Nxumalo and Mavela Nkosi, to The Special Commissioner, 28th October 1902, attached to a letter, Commissioner for Native Affairs, to Sir Thomas Cunningham, 14th January 1903, J14/03, SNA.

expenses in feeding the scouts. He told the Special Commissioner that his people were making demands on him for payment for their services.⁵⁶ Of course, in the eyes of most British military authorities, Mavela had an impeccable military service record. In Cunningham's view, "Mavela most certainly did splendid work, being practically the only loyal Swazi of influence in South Western Swaziland."⁵⁷ Besides recommending that Mavela be paid £50 to bury the incident of his village's destruction by the Boers, Cunningham suggested that in general the British authorities in Pretoria should not pay war claims by the emaSwati scouts. He asserted, "if these boys were paid, I think the others similarly employed in other Districts would have similar claims. As there were nearly 1700 in all, the amount of the claims would be very great, therefore I do not recommend that they should be paid."⁵⁸ In spite of the Swazi scouts' significant contribution toward the British defeat of the Boers, the British military authorities did not want to reward them.

Other Swazi scouts worked under white agents. Such scouts were paid as follows: 3/6 a day for a Head *Induna* (headman), and 50/- a month for an ordinary scout. There were about one thousand seven hundred Swazi scouts who rendered their services to the

⁵⁶Copy of a letter, Benjamin Nxumalo and Mavela Nkosi, to the Special Commissioner, 28th October 1902, J14/03, SNA.

⁵⁷Copy of a letter, Thomas Cunningham, Staff Captain and late Intelligence Officer, Barberton District, to Sir Godfrey Lagden, Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, 17th January 1903, J14/03, SNA.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*

British under white agents in various districts in Swaziland.⁵⁹

Another significant involvement of the emaSwati in the war was that of Chief Ndabazewe who lived near the border of Ingwavuma District. He passed information to the British in Natal Colony on the movements of the Boers. He also gave such information to the R.M. Ingwavuma. Ndabazewe's services contributed to the Boers' defeat and were admired by various British officials. Thus, when the war ended, some officials recommended that Ndabazewe be presented a Lee-Metford rifle with ammunition, in recognition of his services, while others recommended that he be given cattle instead, because the law that disarmed Africans in the Transvaal would likely be extended to Swaziland as well. Thus, as one British official put it, "it would be embarrassing just now to issue a rifle in Swaziland."⁶⁰

Presenting Ndabazewe a gun and ammunition would have been a symbolic recognition of his services. But, on the whole, it was the cheapest way to reward a chief

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

⁶⁰Copy of Minutes from A.P. Maritz, Magistrate, Ingwavuma District, to the C.M. & C.C. Eshowe, 14 July 1902, J197/02; Copy of Minutes from C.R. Saunders, C.M. 7 C.C. Eshowe, to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 2 August 1902, J197/02; F.R. Moor, Secretary for Native Affairs, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, to The Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, 6th August 1902, J197/02, and S.O. Samuelsin, Under Secretary for Native Affairs, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, to The Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, 9th December 1902, J197/02. For those who opposed a present in the form of a rifle, and instead suggested cattle, see Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, to The Secretary for Native Affairs, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, 11th December, 1902, J197/02; G.Y. Lagden, Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, to The Secretary for Native Affairs, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, 14th August 1902, J197/02, and the quotation is from Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, to The Secretary for Native Affairs, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, 16th December 1902, J197/02, SNA.

who had placed his life and that of his village in danger by siding with the British. A rifle or a few cattle would not bring about material improvement for Ndabazewe and his village. The fact that the British were concerned with developments in the Transvaal when considering a type of present for Ndabazewe demonstrates that they were more concerned with establishment of British imperial order in southern Africa than with rewarding the emaSwati for their part in the war. The suggestion of presenting Ndabazewe's gift through the Special Commissioner for Swaziland in Mbabane, was probably intended to win Ndabazewe's loyalty to the emerging colonial British administration in Swaziland. This step was also an aspect of a larger scheme: to establish a layer of loyal chiefs who would be useful to the British administration, which it was intended to establish immediately after the war.

The involvement of Chiefs Mavela and Ndabazewe on the British side, important as it was for the British, did not bring about the fuller involvement of the Swazi state in the form of the Swazi Monarchy. The Monarchy became actively involved in the war only when the British military authorities gave Queen Regent Labotsibeni "orders and permission to seize and appropriate Boer cattle" in Swaziland. (Similar orders were given by various column commanders to many chiefs in the Transvaal as well.)⁶¹ Some of these orders were given verbally to Labotsibeni, with a view toward, as Lyttleton presumed, their "being kept secret."⁶²

⁶¹Confidential letter, Sir Godfrey Y. Lagden, Special Commissioner for Native Affairs, Pretoria, to Sir Neville Lyttleton, G.O.C. Transvaal, June 30th, 1902, J58/02, SNA.

⁶²Confidential letter, Neville Lyttleton, Pretoria, to The Commissioner for Native Affairs,

From 1901 onward, the war shifted from open pitched battles to guerilla tactics, which required intimate knowledge of the terrain on which the war was fought. It is not surprising that during this phase many Boers returned with their livestock to their old country, Swaziland, without the permission of Queen Regent Labotsibeni.

These Boer incursions into Swaziland prompted Major General T.E. Stephenson, Commanding British Forces, Barberton District, eastern Transvaal, to write on February 2, 1901 to Labotsibeni to inform her that Kitchener wished her to order the emaSwati to "defend themselves against all Boer incursions into" her country. He also informed her that Kitchener gave orders that "all Boer cattle taken by your people will become their lawful property."⁶³ Labotsibeni sent a letter to the British military authorities on February 16, 1901 requesting protection for Southern Swaziland against Boer invasion. On February 21, 1901 Lieutenant General J.D.P. French, who commanded the British forces on the Swaziland Frontier, replied that he was despatching British troops to the south of Swaziland. He also told her to attack and eject any Boers entering Swaziland, and to keep their cattle for her "own use."⁶⁴ Captain Dudley Rideout wrote to Labotsibeni to ask her to grant permission to three white men, whom he was sending to Swaziland for a

2 July 1902, J58/02, SNA.

⁶³Copy of a letter, T.E. Stephenson, Major General, Commanding British Forces, Barberton District, to the Queen Regent, Swaziland, J180/03, SNA. For another view that orders from the Military Authorities resulted in the involvement of the emaSwati in this war, see letter, Enraght Moony to The Acting Secretary, Swaziland Administration, 25th April 1904, J32/03, SNA.

⁶⁴Copy of a letter, J.D.P. French, Lt. General, Piet Retief, Transvaal, to Nabatibeni (Labotsibeni), Queen Regent of Swaziland, 21st February 1901, J180/03, SNA.

special mission, to remain in her country for an indefinite time. He asked her to cooperate with these men by giving them "all the information they require," and told her that the British were capturing Boer prisoners daily, that many Boers were surrendering, but that their leaders were still adamantly refusing to surrender. He concluded his note by reminding Labotsibeni that she would "of course prevent any supplies reaching the Boers and to stop all letters coming through to them. Your people may take all cattle and sheep they find belonging to the Boers."⁶⁵

Armed with these orders and assurances from the military authorities, Labotsibeni directed Swazi chiefs to organize their *emabutfo* (regiments) to expel Boers from Swaziland and to confiscate their stock. She instructed chiefs who were in charge of the *emaSwati* regiments that, should there be fighting with the Boers, Boer women and children should not be killed, for she was ordered by the British not to kill them.⁶⁶ The first target of the Swazi regiments was a party of Boers who had reentered Swaziland without Labotsibeni's permission, apparently in their attempt to escape from the British forces at Piet Retief. In February 1901 Labotsibeni despatched an *ibutfo* under Chief Thintintha Dlamini to expell the Boer party from Swaziland. Subsequently three Boers, Lodewijk Andries Slabbert, Hendrik Slabbert and Hans le Roux were killed by Thintitha's

⁶⁵Copy of a note from Dudley Rideout, Cap. R.E. Intelligence Officer, 2nd Cavalry Brigad, Intombi, to Queen of the Swazi People, n.d., J180/03, SNA.

⁶⁶Sworn statement of Chief Thintitha Dlamini, who led a Swazi regiment which exterminated the Boers on Hlatikhulu Mountain in March 1901, before Bertram Nicholson, Sub-Commissioner for Natives, Hlatikhulu Division, Swaziland, 17th March, 1903, J180/03, SNA.

ibutfo near Umsheng's Drift on the Assegai River. According to an eye-witness account, thereafter the regiments threw Slabbert's body into the river.⁶⁷ (This document does not specify whether it was Lodewijk Andries Slabbert's or Hendrick Slabbert's body.)

By February 1901 parties of Boers with their families and stock reentered Swaziland from many directions without permission from Labotsibeni and attempted to dodge British forces by taking refuge at Hlatikhulu Mountain. Chief Silele reported the presence of these Boers to the Queen Regent. On March 4, 1901 Labotsibeni despatched Chief Siquza (alias Thintitha) Dlamini and four other chiefs with about eighty Swazi *emabutfo* to expel Boers from Hlatikhulu Mountain. They delivered Labotsibeni's message that all armed Boers should leave Swaziland immediately in order to avoid their being attacked by the British, in which case Swaziland would be turned into a battlefield, and this she wanted to prevent. Thintitha told the Boers to leave all their cattle because they belonged to the Queen Regent, who was given them by the British. At this point Salomon Maritz, who was one of the Boers on Hlatikhulu Mountain, told Thintitha that he was a resident of Swaziland and that he had never left Swaziland. But, on March 6, 1901 Chief Ntshingila of Hlatikhulu advised him and other Boers to leave, for Thintitha was ready to attack them. Under pressure from the emaSwati *impi* (military unit), Maritz, Joubert, H. Mey, H. van der Schyf and D. Jordaan left Hlatikhulu Mountain to surrender to the British camp at Mahamba under Colonel Allenby's column on March 6, 1901.

⁶⁷Letter, R. Drake, Captain, Assitant Resident Magistrate, Piet Retief, to The Special Commissioner for Swaziland, Mbabane, 5th October 1903, SCS 2245/03, SNA. See also a copy of an affidavit by Macapikolo sworn before Thomas S. Dunn M.B., Justice of the Peace, 30th September 1903, SCS 2245/03, SNA.

On their way to the British camp, they told other Boer parties such as those of J. Engelbrecht, J. Rudolph, and others, that they were going to surrender. Maritz warned the other Boers of what could happen to them if they refused to surrender. But, they ignored his warning. There were more than ten Boer families with large numbers of stock.⁶⁸ Fredrick Smuts, one of the Boers who lost his stock, estimated the stock from Boers in Nooitgedacht, Klipbank, in Ermelo District, and Standerton District at about two hundred and ninety-six.⁶⁹

When Thintitha gave Labotsibeni's orders to these Boers to leave Swaziland, the latter refused "in an insolent manner (it is said)" to cooperate. They said "they recognised no Native Authorities and did not fear them."⁷⁰ Moreover, a Boer poked Thintitha in the face and told him that "there was no Swazi King, he was dead," and therefore they would not leave the country.⁷¹ They were quickly forced to swallow their words, when on

⁶⁸Sworn statement by Salomon Maritz, who fought for the Boer forces, before Bertram Nicholson, Sub-Commissioner, Hlatikhulu, Swaziland, March 26th, 1904, J32/03, SNA. See also a sworn statement by Bulindhlela, Queen Regent Labotsibeni's royal messenger, who lived at the Zombodze Royal Palace, before Francis Enraght-Moony, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, April 2, 1904, J32/03, SNA.

⁶⁹Sworn statement by Frederick J. Smuts before S.W. Jones J.P. (J.P. might stand for Justice of the Peace), 15th June, 1903, J32/03, SNA. See also sworn statements by the men who were looking after the Boer stock when it was captured by the emaSwati emabutfo. These men were Gentleman (a Swati), Jack (another African), and Umzela, their statements were sworn before S.W. Jones at Ermelo on the respective dates, 2nd June, 1903, 15th June, 1903, and 16th June, 1903, in *ibid.*

⁷⁰Copy. Confidential letter, F. Enraght-Moony, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, Mbabane, to The Assistant Secretary for Swaziland Affairs, 18th August, 1903, J32/03, SNA.

⁷¹Sworn statement by Thintitha Nkosi before Bertram Nicholson, Sub Commissioner for

March 9, 1901 Thintitha's regiment attacked and killed some of them at Hlatikhulu battle.

Several others, including Andries Breytenbach, Adriaan Pretorius and Gouws escaped to the eastern Trasvaal near Bethal. Thintitha captured their stock and sent it to the Queen Regent. There is no consensus on the number of people who died in this battle.

According to eye-witness accounts, six Boers, one Cape boy, and two emaSwati were killed and six emaSwati wounded. Others put the number of Boers killed at eight and state that none of the emaSwati were killed.⁷² Other scholars who have briefly referred to this encounter are completely silent on casualties on the emaSwati's side.⁷³ The commanders of the *emabutfo* vehemently denied that white women and children were killed during this battle or thereafter, but, some British officials believed that some were killed.⁷⁴ Although the African men who were looking after the Boer stock received some blows from the emaSwati *impi*, they were not killed, because as Umzela, one of the men who looked after the Boers' stock heard one of the *emabutfo* members saying "our orders

Natives Hlatikhulu Division, Swaziland, and witnessed by H. Raddon-Reed, 17th March 1903, J180/03, SNA.

⁷²Sworn statements by Sinyewana Nkosi, Thintitha Dlamini and Mcaca Lukelo, respectively, before Betram Hicholson, Sub Commissioner for Natives, Hlatikhulu, Swaziland, March 2, 1903, March 17, 1903, and March 5, 1903, J32/03, SNA. See also B. Nicholson to The Special Commissioner, Swaziland, March 20th, 1903. The mere pressure of testifying before a British official might have contributed to different statistics from these eye witness accounts.

⁷³See Warwick, *Black People*, p. 107, and Matsebula, *History*, 176.

⁷⁴See Letter, Enraght-Moony, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, to The Commissioner for Native Affairs, 28th March 1903, J32/03, SNA.

are not to kill the Natives, we have got to clean the whitemen [sic] out."⁷⁵ When the British Colonel Allenby was informed of this attack, he did not immediately take any action against the emaSwati, except the collecting of information. It was only after the British took over Swaziland that Thintitha was imprisoned by the British for "exceeding his orders" by killing the Boers.⁷⁶

Some Boers were separated from their families following the emaSwati-Boer fight at Hlatikhulu Mountain. When asking for assistance from the British officials in Swaziland to trace their lost families, some Boers referred to the Hlatikhulu Battle as a massacre.⁷⁷ One British official corrected this view by pointing out "the incident can hardly be called a massacre, for plain warning was given, an attack made in day light and resistance offered by Boers who wounded several Natives and some were apparently killed."⁷⁸ The Hlatikhulu Battle had a far reaching effect on the Boer community in

⁷⁵Sworn statement by Umzela before S.W. Jones (J.P.), 16th June 1903, Ermelo, J32/03, SNA. See also Sworn statement by Gentleman before S.W. Jones (J.P.), 2nd June 1903, and Jack before S.W. Jones (J.P.), 15th June 1903, all at Ermelo, J32/03, SNA.

⁷⁶F. Enraght-Moony to The Commissioner for Native Affairs, 28th March 1903, J32/03, SNA. For Thintitha's going beyond Labotsibeni's orders, see Matsebula, History, p. 176. The circumstances pertaining to Thintitha's death are underreaserched, thus we know very little to allow us to make an informed opinion on them.

⁷⁷To label this battle a massacre is indicative of the spread of Europeans' colonial vocabulary which was characterized by prejudice and condescension. One scholar has recently demonstrated this as follows: white victories are referred to in school histories as battles, and victories of those who are not white as massacres. See Ronald Wright, Stolen Continents: The "New World" Through Indian Eyes (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1992), p. x. This paper, therefore, refers to the Hlatikhulu incident as a battle instead of a massacre.

⁷⁸Confidential letter, F. Enraght-Moony to The Assistant Secretary for Swaziland Affairs,

Swaziland. Many Boers, such as P.J.C. Venter, who could not trace their relatives in Swaziland after the war, referred to the Hlatikhulu Battle as a starting point in their search for relatives.⁷⁹ Since the Hlatikhulu Battle was so central as a reference point to Boers in search of their relatives after the war, important inferences could be made. First, it is probable that many people (emaSwati and Boers) died in this battle. Second, the battle was a significant military encounter between the emaSwati and the Boers that compelled the Boers to surrender to the British or to run away from Swaziland.

For the emaSwati's *emabutfo*, the Hlatikhulu incident brought about military distinction to Thintitha who "gained a great reputation as a warrior, while he was a favourite of the Ndlovukazi [Labotsibeni] for having sent the captured cattle to her."⁸⁰ Since the days of the emaSwati's military alliance with the British against the BaPedi in 1879, there was no Swazi army commander who distinguished himself on the battlefield. The Hlatikhulu incident provided Thintitha with such an opportunity. However, Thintitha did not live long enough to establish his newly-earned military reputation. In about January 1907 he was shot dead while allegedly resisting rearrest by Swazi

18th August 1903, J32/03, SNA.

⁷⁹ See for example, letter from Leonard Bangle, Assitant Resident Magistrate, Bethal, to the Resident Magistrate, Standerton, 24th January 1903, J32/03; D. Honey, Assistant Secretary for Swaziland Affairs, to The Special Commissioner for Swaziland, 27th January 1903, J32/03; F. Enraght-Moony to The Commissioner for Native Affairs, 28th March 1903, J32/03; Confidential letter from F. Enraght-Moony to The Assitant Secretary for Swaziland Affairs, 18th August, 1903, J32/03 and J.P. Scallan to B. Nicholson, Sub Commisioner, Swaziland, February 18th, 1903, J32/03, SNA.

⁸⁰ F. Enraght-Moony, Resident Magistrate for Swaziland, Mbabane, to The Secretary for Swaziland Affairs, Johannesburg, 26th January 1907, J8/1907, SNA.

constables employed by the British administration, which had by this time been established in Swaziland. Queen Regent Labotsibeni was very incensed with the news of his death, to the extent that she was reported to have "indulged in loose talk and threats against the particular Native Constables at whose hands Tintita met his death."⁸¹ Such talk was also joined by Swazi young men. But Labotsibeni's advisers blamed Thintitha for his own death.⁸²

The emaSwati's capture of Boer livestock was not limited to the Hlatikhulu Battle. Long after, in May 1901, Queen Regent Labotsibeni and the Swazi Council received instructions from Johannes Smuts to capture Boer cattle. Apparently, as an exercise in 'damage control', Smuts gave specific orders relative to this effect:

if the Swazis, when acting on their own accord in obedience to the foregoing instructions, (i.e. remaining loyal & keeping Boers out), capture stock belonging to Boers, they may keep them, but they must at once report to the nearest British Officer the number taken, and, if possible, the names of the Boers to whom they belong. If the Swazis capture stock when they are acting under the orders of British Officers, or when they are forming a part of a British force they are not entitled to keep such stock.⁸³

Smuts also told these emaSwati leaders that certain emaSwati near the border were guarding the Boer cattle, which they claimed to be theirs. This, in his view, was assisting the Boers, and he prohibited the emaSwati from doing so. He instructed the

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Extract from a Message delivered by Mr. Smuts in Swaziland to the Queen Regent and Council in May 1901, in G.Y. Lagden, Commissioner for Native Affairs, to The Special Commissioner for Swaziland, J10/03, SNA. Johannes Smuts was a British consul in Swaziland from July 1895 until the outbreak of the South African War in October 1899.

emaSwati leaders that should the Boers bring their cattle to them to "*siza*" them, they "must refuse to do so, but must bring the Boers and their cattle to the British Troops." He warned Labotsibeni and the Council that the emaSwati would not benefit from "hiding Boer stock", because when the war ended any emaSwati found in possession of unaccounted for Boer stock would be punished and such cattle would be repossessed.⁸⁴

Since cattle were so highly valued by the emaSwati for socio-economic needs, Smuts' orders had a stronger appeal to the emaSwati rulers. But, unlike those given by British military authorities, his had a sting at their tail. By telling the emaSwati to keep records of confiscated cattle and the names of the Boers from whom cattle were captured, and by specifying that any Swazi deviation from his instructions would be punished by the British after the war, Smuts left the door open for the British repossession of Boer cattle captured by the emaSwati during the war. Such a suggestion was a new phenomenon to the emaSwati, who were accustomed to increasing their stock by war booty. Indeed, when they had given military assistance to the British against the BaPedi in 1876-1879, the emaSwati were allowed to return to Swaziland with thousands of cattle as booty.⁸⁵ His instructions were also suggestive of the British intentions that Swaziland come under British control when the war was over. By forbidding the emaSwati from looking after the Boer cattle under '*siza*' arrangements, Smuts diminished any semblance of Swazi neutrality in this war. Instead, he was fully enlisting Swazi involvement on the

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Joseph H. Lehmann, The Model Major-General: A Biography of Field-Marshal Lord Wolseley (Boston: The Riverside Press Cambridge, 1964), p. 276.

British side against the Boers.

Indeed, through Labotsibeni's orders emaSwati captured large numbers of Boer cattle during the war, which she "distributed at intervals" among her subjects, a key means for boosting her power base.⁸⁶ The capture of Boer cattle was one of the major ways in which the emaSwati became involved in the South African War. According to a certain Mr. Beyers the emaSwati captured Boer stock as far as the Piet Retief District of the Transvaal. (A resident magistrate for Swaziland disputed Beyers's statement by pointing out that the Boer stock was captured by the emaSwati at Hlathikulu after the emaSwati-Boer battle, and not at Piet Retief.⁸⁷)

Some of the emaSwati suffered from night raids for cattle and harassment by the British forces. The emaSwati who lived at Ngogweni in Piet Retief District had their cattle raided by Gouman and Charles King of Mahamba, who worked for the British Intelligence Department based in Hlathikhulu. This occurred just before the final surrender of the Boers. On one night Mgwayiza Mtungwa was awakened by horses at his residence. When he went out of his house he saw his brother Nyunda being taken by Africans who were with King, and were beating him with a whip while asking him whose cattle were in his kraal. They accused him of looking after Boer cattle. Although he told them that the cattle were his, they took them away. Many other households were raided in a similar fashion on that night and their cattle were taken away by King and another

⁸⁶Letter, G.Y. Lagden to Neville Lyttleton, June 30th, 1902, J58/02, SNA.

⁸⁷Letter, Resident Magistrate for Swaziland, Mbabane, to the Secretary for Swaziland Affairs, Johannesburg, 15th June 1905, R.M.S.108/05, SNA.

white man, who was only known by his Swazi name of "Nomatshayinkonjana". King and "Nomatshayinkonjana" drove the cattle to Hlathikhulu.⁸⁸ Incidents such as this must be taken as widespread, because as pointed out by one British official when the war ended; "most of the damage claimed for [by Africans] was done by the British Forces."⁸⁹

The ironic aspect of the emaSwati's involvement in this war, at least from the emaSwati's view, emerged when the war ended. The emaSwati's reasons for entering the war appeared unattainable at the end of the war. Then, the British War Office was flooded with compensation claims for war losses. The Central Claims Board outlined the conditions under which claims by Africans could be considered for compensation.⁹⁰ In the Transvaal, District Commissions handled claims by ex-burghers, whereas claims by British subjects and foreigners were dealt with by Resident Magistrates. In Swaziland a Commission to deal with claims by ex-burghers, British subjects and foreigners was established. At the beginning claims by the emaSwati were not entertained, and the

⁸⁸ See sworn statements by Mgwayiza Mtungwa, Nyunda Mtungwa, Somveli Mthembu, and Mgoduka Mthembu, before Bertram Nicholson, Sub Commissioner for Natives, Hlatikulu, Swaziland, January 27th, 1903, and a covering letter for these sworn statements from B. Nicholson, to The Special Commissioner for Swaziland, January 28, 1903, SCS 641B/02, SNA. See also a letter from Jones, Resident Magistrate, Piet Retief, to B. Nicholson, Sub Commissioner for Native Affairs, Hlatikhulu, 29th December 1902, SCS 641B/02, SNA. Jones suggested to Nicholson that these complains by the emaSwati be handled in their early stages by his court at Piet Retief, because the allegations were done by a white man.

⁸⁹ Memorandum on "Native Compensation Claims," J153/03, SNA.

⁹⁰ A Minute with reference to Claims of Natives for Compensation for War losses, from Col French for President Central Claims Board, Pretoria, to Sir Godfrey Lagden, Special Commissioner for Native Affairs, 28 September 1902, J159/02, SNA.

emaSwati's claims against the military were to be referred to the Military Compensation Board.⁹¹

Out of a loan of £2,000,000 for compensation for claims by Africans, a sum of £200,000 was for compensation for war losses suffered by Africans from the conquered territories. Swaziland submitted a claim of £2231 17/6, evaluated at £1109 2/6 for losses incurred by the emaSwati. However, Swaziland's claim was not considered for payment from the loan.⁹²

If compensation claims for war losses are anything to go by, they serve as a partial indication of the extent to which the emaSwati were either involved or affected by the war. For example in a single case alone Reuben Twala, a Swazi teacher who lived near the Mahamba Mission Station, provided the British forces with five or six hundred bags of corn (mealies) upon their arrival at Mahamba. He also sustained losses from the war. He claimed compensation for the following damages: twenty head of cattle, ten goats, four riding horses, and three pigs; a three-room house with thatched roof; furniture which included one table, two chairs, sofa, glass cupboard, three bed-steads, fifteen ceiling boards, and two ploughs with yokes and chains; as well as six mealie gardens.⁹³ It is

⁹¹Sir Godfrey Lagden's minute on "Compensatin Claims," Johannesburg, December 12, 1902, and D. Honey to The Secretary for Native Affairs, 8 December 12, 1902, J159/02, SNA.

⁹²Memorandum on "Native Compensation Claims," J153/03, SNA.

⁹³Letter from Hubert B. Cawood, attorney, notary public and conyancer, Ladysmith, Natal, to Captain T.S. Fox Strangways, A.P.M. Ladysmith Sub District, Ladysmith, 29th May 1901, J153/03, SNA.

probable that many emaSwati sustained losses from the war, but could not afford to get lawyers or other channels through which to present their claims. As such, their claims remain undocumented.

The most controversial aspect regarding compensation for war losses and reasons for the emaSwati's entering the war on the British side was an attempt to retrieve the captured Boer stock from the emaSwati and the emaSwati stock captured by the Boers.⁹⁴ What was hinted at by Smuts in 1901 regarding a possible British government directive to the emaSwati to return Boer stock captured during the war, became apparent in a circular issued on 11 September 1902. This circular stipulated:

1. If it is proved that such stock was captured in war by the British Forces, and given to the natives by Military Authorities for services rendered it shall be restored to Government by delivery to the nearest Repatriation Depot, and compensation shall be given to the natives equal to the full value, as defined by section 4.
2. If it is proved that such stock was looted by natives under Military Orders, or advice, it shall be returned to the claimant upon his satisfying the Magistrate or Native Commissioner that he is the rightful owner, and compensation shall be given by Government to the natives equal to half the value, as defined in section 4.
3. If the stock cannot be shown to have been acquired by either of the foregoing method, or by any lawful means, it shall, on being identified, be returned to the rightful owner, without compensation to the natives.
4. For the purpose of compensation, the following tariff should be observed. All stock should be valued according to age and condition. The valuation shall not exceed in the case of horses £10, cattle £9, sheep & goats 15/-.⁹⁵

⁹⁴For a reference to a stock taken by Boers from Africans, see Circular No. 1754/02, from W. Windham, Secretary for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, to The Native Commissioner District, 25th September 1902, J144/02, SNA.

⁹⁵Circular No. 1516/02, signed for Secretary for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, to The Native Commissioner District, 11th September 1902, J144/02, SNA.

This circular had the effect of undermining one of the reasons for which the emaSwati **had** joined the war, namely to increase their wealth by capturing Boer livestock.

Although British authorities had largely disregarded most claims for **compensation** by the emaSwati, it was not easy for them to implement the circular. **British** officials found themselves caught between irreconcilable challenges: meeting **Boer** requests for retrieving their livestock from the emaSwati on the one hand, and the **emaSwati** refusal to surrender what they had until then viewed as rightfully theirs by **orders** of the British military authorities. In pressing for immediate British attention to **their** requests some Boers pointed out that as the recovery was proving difficult, each day **their** cattle were dying in the hands of the emaSwati.⁹⁶

Labotsibeni, on her part, each time the question of restoring Boer stock was raised by **the** resident magistrate of Swaziland, dug in her heels, arguing that she had acted on the **orders** and permission of Lord Kitchener and other British military authorities when she **confiscated** Boer livestock. Moreover, she had distributed the booty among her **subjects**. Therefore, she was not willing to restore Boer stock.⁹⁷

In view of the fact that, indeed, when confiscating Boer stock Labotsibeni had

⁹⁶H. Tennet, Secretary to the Law Department, Attorney-General's Office, Pretoria, to The Secretary to the Native Affairs Department, Johannesburg, 20 August 1903, J180/03, SNA. See also a copy of a letter from Fred J. Smuts, Nooitgedacht, Ermelo District, to The Lieutenant Governor, Pretoria, 6th July 1903, J32/03, SNA. Smuts was one of the Boers who lost their stock to the emaSwati subsequent to the Hlatikhulu Battle.

⁹⁷Copy of a confidential letter, Sir Godfrey Y. Lagden, Commissioner for Native Affairs, to Sir Neville Lyttleton, G.O.C. Transvaal, June 30th, 1902, J58/02, SNA, and a letter, Resident Magistrate for Swaziland, Mbabane, to the Secretary for Swaziland Affairs, Johannesburg, 15th June 1905, R.M.S. 108/05, SNA.

acted upon verbal and written orders from the British military authorities, Lagden **conceded** that the British had no right to demand restoration. Thus he directed the **Special** Commissioner for Swaziland that "...to all enquiries you must return reply that we **have** no power to reverse acts done under the written authority of the Commander-in-**Chief**."⁹⁸ Sir Richard Solomon, Attorney General, concurred when he stated that "...it is **quite** impossible for us [the British officials] to ignore the instructions of the Military **Authorities** on which these seizures were made."⁹⁹ Thus the authors, such as Smuts and **those** who wrote circular no. 1516/02, of a plan to restore captured Boer stock after the **war**, had never anticipated Labotsibeni's steadfast refusal to restore them, and by so doing **she** made such a scheme boomerang on the British.¹⁰⁰ Lagden recognized this when he **wrote**: "but this is all coming back on us in a very embarrassing form..... This cattle **question** is bristling with complications."¹⁰¹ Labotsibeni's political acumen was already **apparent** throughout the war and during its aftermath.

Summary

The emaSwati were a significant factor in bringing about a British victory in the

⁹⁸**Copy** of a letter, G.Y. Lagden, Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, to The **Special** Commissioner for Swaziland, 13th February 1903, J180/03, SNA.

⁹⁹**H. Tennant**, Secretary to the Law Department, Attorney-General's Office, Pretoria, to **The** Secretary for Swaziland Affairs, Johannesburg, 3 September 1903, J180/03, SNA.

¹⁰⁰**For** Smuts' message to Labotsibeni, and for the content of circular no. 1516/02, see **above**.

¹⁰¹**G.Y. Lagden**, to Sir Neville Lyttleton, G.O.C. Transvaal, June 30th, 1902, J58/02.

eastern Transvaal and Swaziland. They did not fight merely for a British cause, but they were motivated by their own agendas, which they pursued during and after the war. Some individuals like Mavela fought because they were vaguely promised "good rewards" by British military authorities, while others like Thintitha fought mainly for the cause of the Swazi Paramount Chieftaincy, which they provided with captured Boer stock.

For a long time scholars of Swazi history have either minimized the involvement of the emaSwati in this war, or concentrated on activities of the Steinacker's Horse, which was the name of a British force composed mainly of white and Mozambican African mercenaries. Steinacker's Horse was responsible for protection of the Transvaal-Mozambique border against the Boers. Even the participation of Mozambican Africans in the Steinackers' Horse was confined to providing intelligence. Another event of significance to such scholars has been the destruction of Bremersdorp (Manzini) by the Boers.¹⁰² This treatment of the war grossly undervalues the involvement of the emaSwati and the impact of the war on Swazi society. It is also eurocentric in that it focuses only on areas which involved Europeans.

From the British view, this was an imperial war, in that it was about the extension and consolidation of the British empire in southern Africa. But in the emaSwati's view, it was an anti-colonial war against the Boers who were still in the process of establishing

¹⁰²See Warwick, *Black People*, p. 107, and Matsebula, *History*, pp. 173-175. In fairness, it must be pointed out that Matsebula, important as his works are, never really conducted research as would be expected of historians. He was an amateur historian, and his writings must be understood as work of an amateur historian.

colonial rule in Swaziland. British racism as pertaining to black and white relations in southern Africa, and Swaziland particularly, only emerged during the era of claims for compensation for war losses. After the war, the British categorized claims for compensation into racial categories: whites, Cape Coloreds, and Africans. Whites and Africans were further sub-divided into British and Boers or burghers; South African Africans and Africans from the 'protectorates'. Although Swaziland was not yet a British protectorate when the war broke out, it was classified with Bechuanaland when dealing with war claims.¹⁰³

Further research on compensation for war losses is needed for us to have a full appreciation of how the British imperial power handled claims by Africans. The way claims were dealt with, more than the Anglo-Boer Peace Treaty of Vereeniging in May 1902, which marked the end of the war, could reveal power relations between the emerging British imperial power and African societies. This could also yield further insights to our knowledge of Anglo-African power relations, an aspect which is neglected in southern African historiography, with the exception of Anglo-Boer relations. As Labotsibeni demonstrated, Africans in southern Africa were actively and self-consciously engaged in contests for power regionally as well as locally.

But, more importantly, Labotsibeni later on used the Swazi participation on the British side in this war to negotiate a lenient treatment from British colonial rule which

¹⁰³See for example documents in file J159/03, SNA, which deal with the question of compensation for emaSwati; and file J153/03, SNA, on "Native Compensation Claims." See also file SCS 1010/03, SNA, for a request for a list of the British and the Boer officers in the war.

took over Swaziland after the war. She had also taken advantage of the war time and attempted to revamp the power of the Swazi paramount chieftaincy. When the British took over Swaziland by virtue of their conquest of the Transvaal, Labotsibeni became the main leader for the Swazi paramount chieftaincy. Thus, she became a spokesperson to articulate the Swazi experience of British colonialism in early twentieth-century Swaziland. In the next chapter I explore the circumstances which led her to complain against British colonial rule.

Chapter Eight

'UNDER OUR SHADE WE SAY THE SUN IS BURNING US': SWAZI LEADERS IN COLONIAL POLITICS, c. 1904-1921

Significantly, Swaziland had first experienced the major thrust of Anglo-Transvaal colonialism in the 1890s when it was under the leadership of women: Queen Regent Tibati Madvolomafisha Nkambule and Queen Mother Labotsibeni Gwamile Mdluli. These women had put up a fierce resistance against colonialism, especially against the Transvaal which was overtly known to the emaSwati as a colonial power in what was otherwise a covert Anglo-Transvaal colonial alliance. When Paramount Chief Bhunu reached his majority in 1895 and assumed his co-leadership position with his mother Labotsibeni, he entered into a position altered and degraded from the status of a king to that of the paramount chief by the Anglo-Transvaal colonial powers.¹ And he was in office as a fully-fledged paramount chief just for a very brief period, 1895 to December 1899, especially if we take into account that the tenure of a paramount chief under colonial rule was a lifelong one. He died on December 10, 1899 before the emaSwati participated in the South African War, 1899-1902. He died without making himself a name in fundamental ways in the history of Swaziland, as his mother, Queen Mother Labotsibeni and the Queen Regent Tibati had done by then, by resisting colonialism.

With Tibati's and Bhunu's deaths, in 1895 and 1899, respectively, Labotsibeni found herself again face to face with the threat of colonialism from a power which the

¹See chapters five and six above.

Swazi leaders had traditionally, since 1879, viewed as a friend, namely the British. The late Queen Regent Tibati had a seasoned political ally in Queen Mother Labotsibeni with whom she challenged the imposition of colonialism during her tenure. Queen Regent Labotsibeni, however, reigned at a time when Lomawa Ndwandwe (also known as laNdwandwe or laNxumalo²), the mother of the heir apparent, was a politically unknown figure. LaNdwandwe does not seem to have come close to the political stature of Labotsibeni, even when she officially became the co-leader, in her capacity as queen mother, of the Swazi affairs with her son Paramount Chief Sobhuza II in 1921. Thus, Labotsibeni dominated the political scene in her resistance against the British colonial rule from 1902 to 1921. She gave over the reigns of the paramount chieftaincy³ to Queen Mother Lomawa Ndwandwe and the latter's son Sobhuza II, Paramount Chief, as co-leaders of the Swazi society in 1921. Labotsibeni died in December 1925.

At the beginning of the twentieth-century Swaziland had entered another colonial phase under a different power with Queen Regent Labotsibeni as its head of state, charged with preserving the reigns of the Swazi paramount chief for her grandson Nkhotfotjeni alias Mona Dlamini, who became Sobhuza II upon assuming the position of the Paramount Chief in 1921. When Sobhuza became Paramount Chief in 1921, his

²Prefix *la* in laNdwandwe or laNxumalo means daughter of so and so. In this case, it means daughter of Ndwandwe who is also known as Nxumalo. LaNdwandwe was chosen as queen mother in October 1899, when her son Sobhuza II was chosen as successor to the Swazi throne after the death of his father Paramount Chief Bhunu.

³From here throughout this work I now use the term Swazi National Council or just Swazi Council to refer to Swazi leaders.

mother also assumed her rightful position as *Ndhlovukati*. According to conventional practice Labotsibeni's counterpart was Prince Logcogco Dlamini, who occupied the position of Prince Regent since October 1899. However, Logcogco's influence was gradually superseded by that of Labotsibeni's son Malunge Dlamini.⁴ Malunge had long been Labotsibeni's favorite son. It is claimed that Labotsibeni had even attempted to engineer a scheme to prepare him for a position of Paramount Chief while Bhunu was still alive.⁵ However, this claim must be treated as a mere speculation, at its best, for there is no evidence so far which could elevate it above the realm of speculation. Labotsibeni and Malunge occupied the front positions in challenging the British colonial state in Swaziland which was officially established in 1903.

The history of what the British colonial state did in Swaziland since the beginning of this century has received a considerable scholarly attention.⁶ However, there is still no

⁴In this chapter I am not concerned with either Labotsibeni's succession to the position of Queen Regent or that of Sobhuza II to Paramount Chief. For such information, see Hilda Kuper, *Sobhuza II, Ngwenyama and King of Swaziland: The story of an hereditary ruler and his country* (London: Duckworth, 1978), pp. 30-31. For the selection of Sobhuza II as an heir, see also J.S.M. Matsebula, *A History of Swaziland* (Cape Town: Longman, 1988), p. 170. I wish Kuper and Matsebula were historical in their accounts of the choice of Sobhuza II as a successor to the Swazi Paramount Chieftaincy, because we would have gained a nuanced discussion than the existing one.

⁵Kuper, *Sobhuza II*, p. 30.

⁶See Balam Nyeko, "The Colonial Period in the Historiography of Swaziland (paper presented at conference at the University of Zimbabwe under a theme: "Zimbabwean History: Progress and Development," 23-27 August 1982), 1-16. Nyeko had presented the earlier version of this paper at The University of Zambia, History Staff Seminars, under the title: "Interpreting the Colonial Period in African History: the Case of Swaziland," 24 February 1982, pp. 1-16. Copies of both papers are available at the University of Swaziland, Special Collection, Library.)

historical account on the nature of the colonial state in Swaziland. Like in other colonies in Africa and elsewhere, the British colonial state had delineated Swaziland into European and Swazi zones, from 1904 to 1910. Consequently, the emaSwati were confined to one third of their country's land, whereas the rest of the country was parceled out between the European concessionaires and the British Crown. Thus for the first time in the history of colonialism in Swaziland the emaSwati experienced land deprivation by the colonial state. The earlier Transvaal Boer colonial rule, from 1895 to October 1899, had not yet embarked on a massive land appropriation from the Swazi leaders by the time it was suddenly terminated by the outbreak of the South African War in October 1899. The land alienation by the British colonial state brought home in a profound way the realities of colonialism to the Swazi leaders and their subjects alike. Land alienation was one of the key features which demonstrated the altered power relations between the Swazi leaders and the British colonial state. Other scholars have analyzed and interpreted the partition of the land in Swaziland by the British colonial administration in order to demonstrate two main aspects of colonialism: Swazi loss of independence and the colonial division of space.⁷

⁷See for example, Martin Fransman, "The Colonial State and the Land Question in Swaziland, 1903-1907," in Collected Seminar Papers on the Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries, Vol. 9 (University of London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies, October 1977-June 1978), 27-38; F.J. Mashasha, "The Swazi and Land Partition (1902-1910)," The Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries, Vol. 4 (University of London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1972), 87-107; C.P. Youé, "Imperial Land Policy in Swaziland and the African Response," Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, Vol. VII, 1 (October 1978), 56-70; Balam Henry Labeja Nyeko, "The Swazi Leadership's Response to Colonial Rule, 1902-1930" (Ph.D. thesis, Makerere University, March 1977); Hamilton Siphos Simelane, "Landlessness and Imperial

Like land alienation, the recruitment of African labor for European owned industries was a common feature of European colonialism in Africa. Thus under the British colonial state in Swaziland the emaSwati experienced the impact of what was supposed to have happened in 1899, namely the recruitment of Swazi labor for European own industries in Swaziland and in South Africa. The arrangement for recruitment was unexpectedly stopped by the outbreak of the South African War in October 1899. The theme of the recruitment of Swazi labor for European industries has been widely explored by scholars of Swazi history.⁸

Response in Swaziland, 1938-1950," Journal of Southern African Studies, 17, 4 (December 1991), 717-740; Hamilton Sipho Simelane, "Land, Labour and the Establishment of Commercial Forests in Swaziland, 1947-1962," Journal of Eastern African Research & Development, Vol. 17 (1987), 124-146, and Jonathan Crush, "The Colonial Division of Space: The Significance of the Swaziland Land Partition," International Journal of African Historical Studies, 3, 1 (1980), 71-86.

⁸For example, see Jonathan Crush, The Struggle for Swazi Labour, 1890-1920 (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987); Jonathan Crush, "Landlords, Tenants and Colonial Social Engineers: the Farm Labour Question in early Colonial Swaziland," Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 11, 2 (April 1985), 235-257; Alan Booth, "The Development of the Swazi Labour Market, 1900-1968," South African Labour Bulletin, Vol 7, Nos. 6 & 7 (June 1982), 34-57; Alan R. Booth, "Homestead, State and Migrant Labour in Colonial Swaziland," in John Daniel and Michael F. Stephen, eds., Historical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Swaziland: Selected Articles (University of Swaziland: Social Science Research Unit, 1986), pp.17-50; Alan R. Booth, "Capitalism and the Competition for Swazi Labour, 1945-1960," Journal of Southern African Studies, 13, 1 (October 1986), 125-150; Martin Fransman, "Labour, Capital and the State in Swaziland, 1962-1977," South African Labour Bulletin, Vol 7, Nos 6 & 7 (June 1982), 58-89; F de Vletter, in collaboration with M.H. Doran, A.R.C. Low, F.D. Prinz, and B.D. Rosen-Prinz, "Labour Migration in Swaziland," in W.R. Bohning, ed., Black Migration to South Africa: A Selection of Policy-Oriented Research (Geneva: International Labour Office, 1981), pp. 45-89, and Miranda C. Miles, "Missing Women: A Study of Swazi Female Migration to the Witwatersrand, 1920-1970" (MA thesis, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, 1991).

Few studies have examined the Swazi rulers and their response to colonialism in early twentieth-century Swaziland. Balam H.L. Nyeko has focused on the Swazi reaction to the British colonial rule from 1902 to 1930. He observed that when the British established their administration in Swaziland in 1902, "they left the Swazi traditional form of government largely intact."⁹ In this chapter I will show that this statement underestimates what actually happened to the 'traditional' Swazi political class. Richard Michael Levin, for his part, has concerned himself with what he termed the "Swazi royal power in transition."¹⁰ He employed the conceptual framework of hegemony and crisis,¹¹ which make minimal contribution to scholarly understanding of the history of the Dlamini dynasty under the British colonial rule. Alan R. Booth has recently started a pioneering work on the history of Swaziland by examining the colonial law. However, unlike what I propose to do in this chapter, Booth situates his discussion within the political economy paradigm.¹² In this chapter I attempt to broaden our understanding of

⁹Balam Henry Labeya Nyeko, "The Swazi Leadership's Response to Colonial Rule, 1902-1930" (Ph.D. thesis, Makerere University, March 1977), pp. 12-13.

¹⁰See Richard Michael Levin, "Hegemony and Crisis: Swazi Royal Power in Transition" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Liverpool, 1985). This thesis has since been revised into a book under a different title, see Richard Levin, When the Sleeping Grass Awakens: Land and Power in Swaziland (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1997).

¹¹See Levin, "Hegemony and Crisis."

¹²See Alan R. Booth, "'European Courts Protect Women and Witches': Colonial Courts as Redistributors of Power in Swaziland, 1920-1950," Journal of Southern African Studies, 18, 2 (June 1992), 253-275; Alan R. Booth, "Colonial Law and the Politics of the Swazi Monarchy: King Sobhuza II and Regionalism, 1921-1950" (Paper Presented at the African Studies Association Conference, Seattle, Washington, November 20, 1992), pp. 1-39; Alan R. Booth, "Aspects of the Political Economy of Law in Colonial Swaziland,

the manner in which legal jurisdiction over the emaSwati was contested by the Swazi leaders and the British colonial state.

Most of the above-mentioned themes have been explored by scholars of Swazi history outside the context of what I call colonial politics, i.e., the politicking which transpired in various situations between the Swazi leaders and the British colonial officials.¹³ Colonial politics in Africa was, as scholars of African past have observed elsewhere, imbued with concerns to maintain European “prestige,” “domination” over the colonized and attempts to mystify the nature of European political institution by inventing European traditions, especially those of the monarchy.¹⁴ Colonial politics in Africa also involved hidden transcripts which hid the real intentions which lay behind domination and resistance by both the European colonial power and the colonized

1920-1950” (Paper Presented at the African Studies Association Conference, Baltimore, MD, November 2, 1990), pp. 2-58. For my review of these papers, see chapter one. Indeed, a connection between colonialism and colonial law in southern Africa has received scholarly attention. See, for example, Martin Chanock, Law, Custom and Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), and Sandra Burman, Chieftdom Politics and Alien Law: Basutoland under Cape Rule, 1871-1884 (New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1981).

¹³Other scholars have used the concept of colonial politics in a slightly different connotation from mine. See David Robinson, “Colonial Politics and Historical Texts: The Case of the Umarian Narratives,” Discussion Papers in the African Humanities, African Humanities Program, AH Number 16 (African Studies Center, Boston University, 1991), pp. 1-13.

¹⁴For a discussion of prestige and domination, see Bruce Berman, Control & Crisis in Colonial Kenya: The Dialectic of Domination (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1990), pp. 202-208, and for invention of European traditions, and particularly its monarchical rule in Africa, see Terence Ranger, “The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa,” in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, first pub., 1983, reprinted 1994), pp. 229-236.

African precolonial political institution, and for our case the Swazi National Council under the leadership of Queen Regent Labotsibeni. It is important to acknowledge from the onset that the events I examine in this chapter took place within a colonial context and that both the British colonial administrators and the colonized Swazi leaders understood this point well. However, both groups chose to disguise their perceptions of the nature of colonialism in Swaziland in euphemistic language.¹⁵

The British resorted to euphemism because they wanted to maintain and to portray a picture of themselves and their moral authority as a people incapable of duplicity in their dealings with the emaSwati leaders. We will recall here that as far back as 1881 and 1884 the British had committed themselves as protectors of Swazi independence to compensate for the latter's military assistance to the British conquests of the BaPedi and the AmaZulu kingdoms in 1879.¹⁶ The British again presented themselves to the emaSwati as their protectors against the Transvaal Boer colonial rule in Swaziland from 1895 to October 1899.¹⁷ Labotsibeni and the Swazi paramount chieftaincy, for their part, engaged in euphemism in their dealings with the British colonial power in twentieth century Swaziland, perhaps in order to avoid the sanctions that direct and open statements of resistance to British colonial rule could bring to them. They were concerned with a possibility of being stripped completely of any semblance of

¹⁵For a discussion of the role of euphemism in situation of power relations, see *ibid.*, pp. 152-154.

¹⁶See chapter four above.

¹⁷See chapters five and six above.

power by the British in the eyes of the ordinary Swazi in whose eyes the Swazi paramount chieftaincy presented itself as still having power over them. Consequently, as the Swazi leaders had challenged the British colonial rule, they simultaneously attempted to preserve any semblance of power they still retained over the emaSwati. In this sense, the Swazi leaders were indeed aware of the privileges accruing to them because of their position as a political class within the Swazi society and they did not wish to relinquish any privileges of power either to the colonial state or to any group within the Swazi society which could be brought to power by the British.¹⁸

In this chapter I examine colonial politics in early twentieth-century Swaziland with emphasis on Labotsibeni and the Swazi National Council's resistance to British colonial rule. They were engaged in protest politics against British domination. I situate my analysis within the framework of power relations. This paradigm of power relations as a mode of analysis brings out more nuances to our scholarly understanding of the nature of colonialism in Swaziland and throws light on a question: why is it that in Swaziland the precolonial royal house outlived, though with major bruises, the colonial era? I argue that Labotsibeni had engaged the British in colonial politics with an astuteness which was unparalleled in British colonial Africa. Instead of engaging in the politics of confrontation with the local British administrators in Swaziland or with the

¹⁸For a discussion of privileges of power, see Gerhard E. Lenski, Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966). For class and power in Africa, see a collection of essays in Irving Leonard Markovitz, ed., Studies in Power and Class in Africa (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). And for other studies on power in general, see chapter one above.

British High Commissioner in South Africa, Labotsibeni chose to take her protests against the colonial state back to the corridors of power in London. She sent numerous Swazi deputations with complaints against the British colonial state in Swaziland to the British monarchy. She enlisted the services of the British legal authorities for writing her numerous petitions to England. By so doing, her messages were packaged in a manner which was palatable to her British audience. To be sure, most of her petitions did not bring about the desired results from England. But, through them, she accomplished some indirect successes. For instance, she established for Swazi leaders a pattern of non-violent resistance or protest politics against the British colonial state which culminated in the famous Privy Council Judgement of 1926, an appeal case to the British highest Court of Appeal brought by the Paramount Chief Sobhuza II against a British settler Allister Miller and the Swaziland Corporation.¹⁹ Labotsibeni's non-violent protest politics against the colonial state deprived the British of any pretext to use force against her or the Swazi society in general. Thus, she did not experience what other African leaders of the time who were still resisting British colonial rule such as King Dinizulu of Zululand experienced, namely banishment.²⁰ Labotsibeni's practice of sending deputations to

¹⁹For a discussion of the Privy Council Judgement, see Nyeko, "Swazi Leadership," pp.178-192. For the international attention this incident received from other observers, see E.F. Hunt, "The British Protectorates and the Privy Council," Extracts from Calcutta [India] Weekly Notes, Vol. 30, 41 (August 30, 1926), pp. 1-3. (Hunt's paper is available in J.S.M.Matsebula Collection, University of Swaziland).

²⁰For a discussion of Solomon ka Dinizulu's confrontations with the authorities of British Natal colonial state, see Shula Marks, The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), chapter 1.

England had also an effect of forcing the local colonial administrators to contend with her as a very active head of the Swazi paramount chieftaincy upon whom its cooperation with the colonial state hinged. The paradigm of power relations also reveals the drama that was played out by the colonizers and the colonized in the colonies.

In this chapter I explore an aspect of colonial rule which was laden with implications of power, the boundaries of legal jurisdiction. In general, to have a jurisdiction to pass legal judgments on other people and the authority to execute them imply the exercise of power over people. I examine Labotsibeni's attempts to preserve the jurisdiction of the paramount chieftaincy and chiefs in civil cases which pertained exclusively to the emaSwati. Here I am interested in her motivations to preserve such a jurisdiction, and not to in the actual cases themselves. Labotsibeni's encounter with colonial administrators over her and the Swazi Council's claims to have a right to pass and execute legal judgments on the emaSwati exposed the complexity of power relations in colonial Swaziland specifically, and in colonial Africa in general. It ought to be emphasized that some of the bases of the Swazi monarchy's 'traditional' power was its final authority on legal matters pertaining to the Swazi society and at local and regional levels the monarchy had exercised its legal power through the chiefs. The Swazi legal system regulated that control. It also regulated power relations between the Swazi royal house, and chiefs on the one hand versus the Swazi masses on the other, in an aristocratic class structure characterizing Swazi society until the end of the nineteenth-century Swaziland. Labotsibeni and her chiefs did not wish to see a change in this social structure and they wanted to retain their monopoly on the Swazi legal system for the

maintenance of power relations within the Swazi society. Thus, the British colonial state's appropriation of the right of appeal against Labotsibeni and her Council's legal judgments presented a direct threat to the power of the paramount chieftaincy over its Swazi subjects.

The Establishment of a British Colonial State in Swaziland

On February 18th, 1901, while the South African War was still going on, J. Smuts, former British Consul in Swaziland, wrote a memorandum to Alfred Milner, the British High Commissioner in South Africa, in which he proposed the structure of the British administration for Swaziland after the war. He noted that the emaSwati leaders expected their country to continue its semi-independent status, which had resulted from the withdrawal of the Transvaal administration in October 1899. On how the British government should deal with the Swazi Paramount Chief, Smuts posed this rhetorical question: "Is the office of the Paramount Chief to be continued, or is the Administration to deal directly with Chiefs of the various districts into which the country could be divided?"²¹ Then, he answered himself by presenting an elaborate plan for the structure of the British administration for Swaziland presided over by a resident commissioner. The resident commissioner was to have a final authority in administrative matters, including those pertaining exclusively to the emaSwati. But, more importantly, the

²¹J. Smuts, Pretoria, Despatch No. 6, re: Proposals for the Government of Swaziland, to Sir Alfred Milner, High Commissioner for South Africa, 18 February 1901 (J2/1901, SNA).

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resident commissioner should replace the Paramount Chief as the person to whom appeals from the decisions of chiefs could be lodged. In this way, Smuts reasoned, the emaSwati would look at the resident commissioner, instead of their Paramount Chief, as the final authority over their chiefs. In addition to this, the High Court would continue its jurisdiction in criminal cases as stipulated in the Protocol of 1898 to the Anglo-Transvaal Convention of 1894, whereas the resident commissioner would deal with civil cases which used to belong to the jurisdiction of the paramount chief.²²

Smuts was in fact proposing a withdrawal of the paramount chiefs traditional jurisdiction. By so doing, he moved a step further from the Anglo-Transvaal's alliance of diminution of the paramount chief's powers when the latter's criminal jurisdiction was appropriated to the European-style law courts through the Protocol of 1898.²³ Smuts's proposals were aimed at destroying the foundation of the Swazi precolonial authority, which had so far survived the Transvaal colonial administration strategies to completely eliminate it. He articulated his motivation for his proposals as follows: "Under these proposals the position of Paramount Chief would, to all intents and purposes, cease to be

²²*Ibid.*

²³See "Protocol," Correspondence No 31, in Correspondentie Van Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek Met Betrekkin Tot de Crimineele Jurisdietie van het Hooggerechtshof van Swazieland naar aanleiding van den dood van den Induna M'Baba en anderen in verband met de Conventie van Volksrust van 1894 (Pretoria: 1899), pp. 38-39. See also, Edmund Fraser, Her Majesty's Agent in the South African Republic, and Francis William Reitz, State Secretary of the South African Republic, "Address to Swazis Respecting Protocol," Correspondence No. 35, in *ibid.*, pp. 45-51. For a discussion of the impact of this protocol on the Swazi monarchy in the context of imposing European colonialism in Swaziland, see Genge, "Law," chapter five.

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²⁵Ibid

²⁶Ibid

recognized - they would strike at the root of the whole social system of the country and would mean the practical break-up of the Swazies as a nation....the Military system would also fall to the ground."²⁴ However, should the High Commissioner decide to allow the continuation of the existence of the office of the paramount chief, Smuts suggested the sharing of the distribution of the income from the 'King's Private Revenue concession' which until the outbreak of the South African War, was paid by the Transvaal government to the Swazi monarchy (£12,000 per year). He proposed that the British administration should pay the Paramount Chief £1000 per year and use £1000 or £1500 as allowances to the chiefs who would be appointed "as headmen of districts to assist in the collection of hut tax."²⁵ In general, Smuts's suggestions were an attempt to address a consideration of what should be the position of the institutions of the precolonial Swazi state in the context of a British colonial state in Swaziland. These institutions had so far survived the Transvaal colonial rule.

Here we might note in passing that David Forbes, one of the concessionaires during King Mbandzeni's era, had submitted two memos to Smuts in which he recommended a division of the area reserved for the emaSwati into fifteen or sixteen districts for administrative purposes.²⁶ David Forbes's proposals reveal an aspect of collaboration between a colonial state and the settler communities. In colonial Africa the

²⁴J. Smuts, Pretoria, Despatch No. 6: Proposals for the Government of Swaziland, to the High Commissioner, 18th February 1901, J2/1901, SNA.

²⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶*Ibid.*

colonial state had identified itself very closely with the interests of the European settlers.²⁷ Or to put it differently, European settlers manipulated the colonial state for their gains.

Smuts's proposal was not a new phenomenon in the history of Swaziland. An attempt to abolish the office of the Paramount Chief was earlier made by the Transvaal government in 1898 following the murder of a Swazi Councilor Mbhabha, and the subsequent fleeing of the then Paramount Chief Bhunu to the authorities of Natal British colony. The Transvaal government's plan was opposed by both the Swazi leaders and Milner, who represented the British government. Thus, instead of seeing Smuts's proposal as a paradox, it must be interpreted as the revelation of the British hidden transcript which was kept secret from both their allies, the Transvaal and the emaSwati, even though the latter perceived the British as their protectors against the Transvaal. Milner and Selborne followed closely the spirit of Smuts's proposal in establishing a British administration in Swaziland in 1903. However, the reasons for the failure of Smuts's proposal regarding the destruction of the institution of the paramount chief and the Swazi military system must be traced to the manner in which Queen-Regent Labotsibeni handled colonial politics with the British administration. Now that the Transvaal government was no longer involved in the affairs of Swaziland, the Swazi rulers, for the first time in their contact with the British, found themselves on the opposite

²⁷For southern Africa, see for example, James A. Chamunorwa Mutambirwa, The Rise of Settler Power in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), 1898-1923 (London: Associated University Presses, 1980).

side of the British in defending their integrity and autonomy as a nation.

Smuts was convinced that it would be easy to render the institution of the Swazi Paramount Chieftaincy ineffective, since its incumbent Sobhuza II was still a minor. He even detested the fact that Queen-Regent Labotsibeni was a regent. He referred to her as "undoubtedly a clever woman, but she is vindictive and has an exalted idea of her own position."²⁸ A similar perception of Labotsibeni was articulated by the Special Commissioner for Swaziland on 3rd March 1903, when writing to the Commissioner for Native Affairs, "the Queen Regent, Nabotsabeni [sic], is an extremely ambitious woman, and, notwithstanding her profession of loyalty and satisfaction of the advent of the British, she is very jealous for her power, a fact which is betrayed by her efforts to check the people coming freely to the Government Officers rather than to her."²⁹ Of course Labotsibeni was not a likeable person to the British officials in Swaziland, for she was a custodian and defender of the Swazi paramount chieftaincy, though a hollow institution as it was at the time, for concessions and the 1898 Protocol to the Convention of 1894 had stripped it of its control of the economy and the law of the state.

For their part, the British officials wanted the destruction of this archaic institution, for it stood on the way of their imposition of colonialism in Swaziland. They also perceived Labotsibeni as a force behind the revival of the practices of "smelling out", "killing off", and "eating up", from October 1899, the period of the withdrawal of the

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹Special Commissioner for Swaziland in his "Report on the Condition of Swaziland," forwarded to the Commissioner for Native Affairs, 3rd March 1903, J64/03, SNA.

Transvaal administration from Swaziland, to August 1902.³⁰ 'Smelling out' was a traditional way of finding out wrong doers through the use of diviners (*tangoma*, singular *sangoma*), and the methods used by the diviners to identify the alleged offenders were complex and shrouded in mystery just like some of the methods which were used by police detectives in the Western world. Elsewhere in Africa scholars have observed that the execution of similar practices was indicative of the wielding of power on the masses. For instance Murray Last has argued that the emirs of the state of Sokoto in Northern Nigeria, from 1903 to 1953 attempted to exercise firm control over their subjects at a period when the British had been imposing their colonial order. Last states that "power was taken seriously: violence against anyone who questioned that power was not

³⁰Smuts, Pretoria, Despatch No. 6, to the High Commissioner, 18th February 1901, J2/1901, SNA. See also the Commissioner for Native Affairs's response to Labotsibeni's deputation, in "Deputation to the Commissioner for Native Affairs," 30th June 1902, J6/02, SNA, and a confidential letter, Enraght-Moony, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, Mbabane, to the Commissioner for Native Affairs,, 4th March 1903, J71/03, SNA. 'Killing off' in a literal siSwati translation means *ubulewe*, which means has been punished severely or given capital punishment. Again here, we know that in the Western world capital punishment or execution has long been one of the elements of state craft exercised by kings long ago before the advent of European colonialism in Africa. 'Eating up' literally means in siSwati *udliwe*, i.e., a person has been fined, or punished. Therefore, there was really nothing unusual about these methods of punishing criminals in precolonial Swaziland. However, the British and Boer colonial officials had tended to attach negative and exotic interpretation of these methods of state craft. Consequently, such an interpretation of the Anglo-Transvaal officials was used as a propaganda directed to the audiences in their home countries to justify these officials' 'civilizing mission' in the colonies, and for our case, in Swaziland. The notion of a 'civilizing mission' during the era of Victorian imperialism is a well known phenomenon among scholars. See, D.M. Schreuder, "The Cultural Factor in Victorian Imperialism: a case-study of the British 'civilising mission'," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 4, 3 (May 1976), 283-317.

uncommon - houses burned, individuals beaten up and gaoled or driven out of the area."³¹

The defeat of the Transvaal and Orange Free State Boer Republics by the British and their African allies, including the emaSwati, in the South African War of October 1899 - May 1902 established England as the main European colonial power in southern Africa.³² Queen Regent Labotsibeni was aware of this new British dominance. On June 30, 1902, Labotsibeni sent a deputation to Lord Kitchener at Pretoria, to inquire as to what would be the future of Swaziland now that the war was over, Transvaal having been defeated, and which laws would be in force in her country. She informed him that the beacons which marked her country's borders on the west in New Scotland and on the south east in Mahamba had been tampered with. She also reported the return of the Boers to Bremersdorp (present-day Manzini), of which she disapproved. Sir Geoffrey Lagden, who received the Swazi deputation, responded that Swaziland would be governed through the British laws and that he would soon send British officers to represent him in Swaziland. These officers would also inquire into Labotsibeni's complaints relating to the South African War in Swaziland.³³ It could be argued that through such a deputation,

³¹Murray Last, "The 'Colonial Caliphate' of Northern Nigeria," in David Robinson and Jean-Louis Triaud, eds., with Ghislaine Lydon, assistant ed., Le temps des marabouts: Itinéraires et stratégies islamiques en Afrique occidentale française v.1880-1960 (Paris: Karthala, 1997), p. 74. Emir is an Arabic word which means a leader of a province. Emirates means many small provinces. Caliphate means a Muslim state. (I am thankful to Cheikh Anta Mbacke Babou for this explanation.)

³²Recently scholars have begun to document the involvement of Africans in the South African War, 1899-1902, a factor which has been largely ignored in the historiography of southern Africa. For example, see chapter seven above.

³³Swazi Chiefs: Deputation to the Commissioner for Native Affairs, 30th June 1902,

the Swazi leaders were positioning themselves in a post-war southern African region under the British domination.

In an apparent move to be preemptive in their dealings with this new power, Labotsibeni and the Swazi Council sent a deputation to Lord Kitchener in Pretoria, on July 26, 1902, to find out the British government's position relative to the affairs of Swaziland and to reaffirm the emaSwati contribution to the British defeat of the Boers in the South African War. She congratulated the British government for defeating the Boer Republics in the war. She expressed her wish for Swaziland to be placed under the British government's protection and that the British government would start from a clean slate when establishing their administration in Swaziland.³⁴ And she hoped, "the Resident Commissioner for Swaziland [would] not allow what has been done during [the South African War] to come into question."³⁵ In this way, the Swazi leaders were aiming to prevent the British from making them accountable for their tactics which they employed during the war period toward reviving their power base. Such strategies included the "killing off" for witchcraft, "smelling out" and "eating out". These methods of dealing with the alleged wrong-doers had been bones of contention between Swazi

J96/02, SNA. Lagden was a Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, South Africa.

³⁴Swazi Deputation with a message from Queen-Regent Labotsibeni, Zombodze, Swaziland, to Lord Kitchner, Pretoria, 26-7-1902, J96/02, SNA. Since Kitchner had left South Africa by the time this deputation reached Pretoria, it was received by Sir Geoffrey Lagden, British Commissioner for Native Affairs.

³⁵*Ibid.*

rulers, on the one hand and the Anglo-Transvaal alliance on the other, since the colonization of Swaziland by the British and Transvaal governments. For the Swazi rulers, these were time-honored elements of their statecraft in running the internal affairs of their country.³⁶ The use of such practices on the Swazi subjects had an effect of forging loyalty owing to fear of punishment by such methods.³⁷

The period from 1900 to 1903 was characterized by confusion among the British officials as to what should be the colonial status of Swaziland, as well as the actual titles of its British officials. Suggestions ranged from annexing Swaziland to the Transvaal, administering it as a province of the Transvaal, declaring it a protectorate, to governing it as a quasi-protectorate under the High Commissioner.³⁸ Part of the confusion on what the Colonial Office should do with Swaziland lay in the then unresolved question of conflict

³⁶For a discussion of this, see Genge, "Law," chapter four.

³⁷Special Commissioner for Swaziland, "Forwarding Report on the condition of Swaziland," to the Native Commissioner for Native Affairs, 3rd March 1903, J64/03, SNA.

³⁸For this confusion, see a letter, J. Smuts, Pretoria, to Sir Alfred Milner, 18th January 1901; copy of a reply to this first letter on behalf of Milner, marked private, G.V. Fiddes, Government House, Cape Town, to Smuts, 6/2/1901; copy of a confidential telegram, from High Commissioner, to Smuts, Resident Commissioner for Swaziland, Pretoria, 13th February, 1901; an extract, J. Smuts, Pretoria, to Milner, 19th February 1901; letter, J. Smuts, Johannesburg, to Milner, 27th January 1902; letter, Commissioner for Native Affairs, to the Controller of the Treasury, Swaziland, 6-2-1902; letter, J. Smuts, Johannesburg, to the Secretary for Native Affairs, No. 1/33/02, 1st April 1902, and confidential letter, J. Smuts, to the Commissioner for Native Affairs, 7th April 1902. All these documents are in file J36/02, SNA. See also a reference to Milner's memorandum which he prepared for his meeting with the then Secretary of State Joseph Chamberlain in December 1902, in Cecil Headlam, ed., The Milner Papers: South Africa, 1899-1905 (London: Cassell, 1933), pp.430- 431.

of interests in concessions among Europeans. Thus the Secretary of State had sent a confidential telegraph to Alfred Milner, Governor of the Transvaal colony, on May 23, 1903 providing him with a directive on the status of Swaziland. The Secretary of State wrote, "I think it is preferable until concessions question is settled to provide for administration of Swaziland by Governor of Transvaal as a Protectorate."³⁹ Thus the notion of Swaziland being a British 'protectorate' colony was intended as a stopgap measure until concession disputes were resolved. In a rather paradoxical way, given the fact that the emaSwati had fought on the British side against the Transvaal Boers in the recent South African War of 1899 to 1902, the British government based its claim on conquest as a colonial power of Swaziland. In a preamble to the Swaziland Order-in-Council Proclamation of 1903, the British King issued the following statement on June 25, 1903, "And whereas all the rights and powers of the late South African Republic [the Transvaal] with respect to Swaziland have, by virtue of the conquest and annexation of the said South African Republic passed to His Majesty, and His Majesty has by treaty, capitulation, grant, usage, sufferance and other lawful means, power and jurisdiction in Swaziland."⁴⁰

Other points worth noting are the opposite perceptions of the status of Swaziland from the outbreak of the South African War in October 1899 to its end in May 1902.

³⁹Confidential copy of a telegram, from Secretary of State to Governor, Johannesburg, telegram No. 4, May 23, 1903 (J183/03, SNA).

⁴⁰A Preamble of "The King's Most Excellent Majesty in Council, at the Court at Buckingham Palace, the 25th day of June 1903, to the Swaziland Order-in-Council Proclamation of 1903" (J183/1903, SNA).

From the Swazi leaders' point of view, this was a period of the restoration of their independence from the Transvaal government's colonial administration, whereas the British officials viewed this period as an era of interregnum. By August 1902 Geoffrey Lagden, British Commissioner for Native Affairs in the Transvaal had despatched F. Enraght-Moony as a Special Commissioner and a police force in Swaziland.⁴¹ But such an arrangement was far from being satisfactory for him, for after he had instituted such a basic administrative structure he described the condition of Swaziland in 1902 to Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State, as "one of pacific chaos."⁴² And he added, "at present no mortal man can say *what Swaziland is*, and almost every question that crops up with reference to that country - and the questions are numerous - is insoluble in consequence of this initial difficult [the confused status of the country from the British colonial viewpoint]."⁴³ Milner had also made an accurate assessment of the emaSwati's limits of resistance to British colonialism, when he said, "...and the Swazis, though grumbling about their subject condition, are not likely to rebel."⁴⁴ Indeed, the emaSwati never revolted against the British colonial state, but instead they resorted to sending numerous

⁴¹For Enraght-Moony's appointment and for his terms of reference, see letter, Commissioner for Native Affairs, Transvaal (Johannesburg), to Enraght-Moony, August 14, 1902, and Extract from Minutes of the Executive Council, August 6, 1902 (File No., J102/02, SNA). Francis Enraght-Moony had prior to coming to Swaziland served as Native Commissioner in Zoutpansberg, far Northern Transvaal and had worked for eighteen years in Basutoland (Lesotho).

⁴²Headlam's reference to Milner's memorandum which Milner had prepared for his meeting with Chamberlain in December 1902. See Headlam, ed., *Milner Papers*, p. 430.

⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 431. Emphasis in the original.

petitions to the home government in which they protested against some of the treatments they received from the colonial state. The Swazi leaders under Queen Regent Labotsibeni had, for their part, taken advantage of this period by reasserting and reviving the monarchical authority.

Like most Africans under the Transvaal Boer control before the outbreak of the war, the emaSwati had joined the British against the Boers, for they were led to believe by the British that the war would liberate their country from the Boers. Therefore, with the defeat of the Boers, the emaSwati leaders looked at the British as a power to provide them with "protection from outside interference" whilst they retained and enjoyed the internal independence of their country as a nation. For their part, the British officials perceived themselves as the new colonial masters of Swaziland by virtue of their conquest of the Transvaal. Therefore, they took upon themselves as their responsibility to impress upon the Swazi leaders that they were no longer independent as a nation, but instead, were subject to British rule.⁴⁵ These various Swazi-British viewpoints on Swaziland became areas of contention as the latter was gradually introducing its colonial rule upon the former.

It was not until the end of August 1902 that the British assumed the administration of Swaziland. From 1903 to 1906 the British government, through its Transvaal administration, issued a series of proclamations as legal documents intended to

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 430.

⁴⁵Special Commissioner for Swaziland, Forwarding a Report on the condition of Swaziland, to the Commissioner for Native Affairs, 3rd March 1903, J64/03, SNA.

establish and redefine the structure and scope or jurisdiction of the British administration in Swaziland. The first Proclamation was published in the Government Gazette of the Transvaal on 25th June 1903 by Governor Sir Arthur Lawley. According to this Proclamation, Swaziland was to be administered as if it "were a district of the Transvaal."⁴⁶

The Transvaal laws were *mutatis mutandis* accordingly. The 1903 Proclamation made provision for the establishment of a Court of Resident Magistrate and a Circuit Court for Swaziland to be presided over by one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of the Transvaal. The Circuit Court would conduct hearings twice a year. There was also a provision for the creation of the office of the Resident Commissioner. Swazi leaders, that is, the Paramount Chief and chiefs were allowed to continue with their jurisdiction in civil disputes on matters pertaining exclusively to the emaSwati.⁴⁷ In making sure that the British administration did not stumble over legal arguments based on the history of the Swazi laws prior to 1903, the proclamation wiped out such a history. In clause fifteen it stipulated, "the laws in force in ... [Swaziland] prior to the date of this Proclamation save and except such laws as are also in force in the Transvaal and the law known as the Grass Burning Law shall be and are hereby repealed." This proclamation had also stipulations on such subjects as the establishment of police force, transfer and stamp

⁴⁶Swaziland Order-in-Council: Proclamation [1903], J183/1903, SNA, p. 1. See also extract from letter. Lord Milner to Mr. Lyttelton, in Headlam, ed., Milner Papers, p.438. By 1903 Alfred Lyttelton was referred to as a new Secretary for the Colonies.

⁴⁷Swaziland Order-in-Council: Proclamation [1903], J183/1903, SNA, pp. 1-3.

duties, mineral and land concessions and tax on concessions. It is important to note that this proclamation revealed a continuity rather than a discontinuity of European colonialism in Swaziland from the previous Transvaal colonial rule.

The British administration was based on a concept which was in use in South Africa in the British administration for Africans, namely "a benevolent despotism." In articulating the relevance of this concept for the administration of the emaSwati, A.G. Marwick, Assistant Commissioner, Mbabane, wrote the following while he was in London with the Swazi Deputation on 17 November 1907: "A benevolent despotism is a form of control best suited to the Natives of Swaziland....They have respect for an official who is always difficult to approach by reason of forms of respect, but who is at the same time easy of access and always ready to hear them in their painfully-drawn-out speeches and arguments."⁴⁸ Here then we have a paradox of a European colonial state in Africa as compared to its metropolitan government. Unlike its democratic metropolitan home government, a colonial state was despotic in nature with reference to its control of the colonized subjects. Other students of colonialism have observed that the colonial state "was entirely uncircumscribed by the democratic rules and demands which inconveniently restricted élite politics in the metropolis. It was an external, in a sense suspended, state which was not the product, or the terrain, of social conflict (as bourgeois

⁴⁸ A summary of the Swazi Deputation's activities in England in November 1907, attached to a confidential letter, A.G. Marwick, Assistant Commissioner, Mbabane, to the Government Secretary, Swaziland, 17 November 1907 (File No. D45/07/640, SNA).

states are) in the society over which it ruled."⁴⁹

Once the colonial state was established, the British administration went about in the country making its presence felt. By May 1903 F. Enraght Moony, Special Commissioner for Swaziland informed the Commissioner for Native Affairs in South Africa that he had completed his job of disarming the emaSwati.⁵⁰

Swazi Leaders Insist on Jurisdiction to Settle Cases Among their Subjects

By 1905 the British colonial state was sufficiently developed to the extent that Labotsibeni and the Swazi Council began to complain to the British authorities in Swaziland about the erosion of their authority over the emaSwati and that the British protection they had hoped for was proving to be an illusion. They wrote the following to the Special Commissioner: "Sir, we complain under our Shade we say the sun is burning us. We ask that the tree of our Shade should shelter us from this burning sun."⁵¹ They listed numerous grievances against the colonial state. They complained of their diminished power over their subjects; of their inability to punish their subjects due to the colonial state's encroachment upon their court jurisdiction; of heavy taxation; of

⁴⁹Sudipta Kaviraj, "On the construction of colonial power: structure, discourse, hegemony," in Dagmar Engels and Shula Marks, eds., Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and Society in Africa and India (New York: British Academic Press, 1994), p.35. For a similar view, see also Crawford Young, The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp.95-102.

⁵⁰Letter, Enraght Moony, Mbabane, to The Commissioner for Native Affairs, Johannesburg, 7 May 1903 (S.C.S. 665/03, but in file no. J64/03, SNA).

⁵¹Complaints of Queen [Labotsibeni], to the Special Commissioner, Mbabane, 1905 (RCS 732/13, SNA).

Labotsibeni's loss of the King's Revenue concession income to the colonial state. Their expressed desire to have an Agent and Adviser to help them in their interaction with the colonial state, and complained of the colonial state's calling of the chiefs for information on the Swazi customs without Labotsibeni's knowledge, and of the colonial state's restriction of visitors to Labotsibeni. These Swazi leaders were upset the colonial state's failure to honor its promise to allow chiefs to possess guns; the British government's failure to compensate the emaSwati for losses incurred during the South African War, 1899 to 1902; the loss of their land, and by European labor recruitment agents who recruited Swazi labor without consulting Labotsibeni. In their sum these grievances were an indictment against the colonial state and they reveal the growing power of the colonial state and the Swazi leaders' concern over this unwelcome development. I do not propose to deal with all these grievances here. Instead, I examine the few complaints to demonstrate the Swazi leaders' attempt to hold on to power over the emaSwati in face of the colonial state.

The Trial of the late Paramount Chief Bhunu's Widows and its Implications for Power Relations

In 1904 the colonial state had a legal case which proved to be a test for the acceptance of its supreme authority in Swaziland directly over the Swazi Paramount Chieftaincy. The case involved six widows of the late paramount Chief Bhunu, who were accused of murdering one of Bhunu's widows. The defendants were Mtsise Dhludhlu, Lomabalu Simelane, Lozangcoto Nkosi, Zibolile Nhlabati, Posile Nkosi and Tosinye

Nsibande were accused of murdering Gqumkele (last name not mentioned). The accused had murdered Gqumkele for she had told them that they would never bear children, a statement which the accused interpreted as a curse. Thereupon they clubbed her to death.⁵² The available documents do not specify when the murder occurred. However, Enraght-Moony, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, mentions that by February 3, 1904 these six widows had been in custody following the charge of murder.⁵³

In February 1904 Enraght-Moony wrote to Milner to inform him that there were twelve Swazi persons in prison in Swaziland awaiting trial for homicide or murder charges. Six of these were the late Bhunu's widows. He asked Milner for arrangements to have these persons tried.⁵⁴

Since these widows belonged to the Swazi royal family, their case resembles that of Bhunu following the murder Mhabha Nsibandze, Swazi Chief Councilor, in 1898,

⁵²Letter, Enraght-Moony, Office of the Special Commissioner, Mbabane, Swaziland, to Acting Secretary, Swaziland Affairs, April 14, 1904 (S.C.S. 99/04, in file no., J28/1904), and copy of a letter, Enraght-Moony to the Acting Secretary for Swaziland, Johannesburg, April 14, 1904 (S.C.S. 99/04, in file J28/1904). I suspect the spelling of the names of the accused widows and that of their victim is incorrect. For further details of how the crime was committed, see "Native Royalty. Six Widows on Trial. Swazieland Murder Case. Women Use Stones and Sticks" *Rand Daily Mail*, April 8, 1904 (File No.: J28/1904, SNA).

⁵³Letter, Special Commissioner, Mbabane, to The Acting Secretary, Swaziland Affairs, February 3, 1904 (File No.: S.C.S. 99, SNA). For a list criminal cases committed in Swaziland up to August 31, 1903, see a copy of F. Enraght-Moony's Report on Swaziland, to His Excellency, the Lieut. Governor, Pretoria, September 18, 1903 (J50/1904, SNA).

⁵⁴Letter, Special Commissioner, Mbabane, to The Acting Secretary, Swaziland Affairs, February 3, 1904 (File No.: S.C.S. 99, SNA).

and the subsequent Transvaal Boer colonial government's attempt to prosecute him. The late Paramount Chief Bhunu had fled to the British authorities in the Natal Colony for asylum.⁵⁵ Just like the Transvaal government in Bhunu's case in 1898, the British colonial state in Swaziland was ill-prepared for a case like this, for it had not yet legally constituted a Court to try criminal cases. Thus, the Governor of the Transvaal hastily appointed three men to a Special Criminal Court of Swaziland: John Fonthill Rubie, Barrister-at-Law, was the Court's President; Francis Enraght-Moony, who was the Acting Special Commissioner in Swaziland, and Bertram Nicholson, Sub-Commissioner in Swaziland.⁵⁶ In conveying to Enraght-Moony the information regarding the constitution of this Special Criminal Court for Swaziland, Richard Solomon, the Attorney-General, wrote to him that the Special Criminal Court was "a purely temporary Court intended to deal with the cases you [Enraght-Moony] wrote to Lord Milner about, but the Proclamation is so shaped that the Court can sit and hear cases arising hereafter until other provisions are made."⁵⁷ Indeed, from then on South Africa continued to provide judges on an ad hoc basis to try criminal cases in Swaziland throughout the period of British colonial rule, i.e., up to 1968.⁵⁸ This practice has given rise to a confusion among

⁵⁵See chapter six above for a discussion of this incident.

⁵⁶Government Notice No. 1 [Swaziland] of 1904, issued by Richard Solomon, Attorney-General, Pretoria, by Command of His Excellency the Governor, No. 28/1904 (File No. J28/1904, SNA).

⁵⁷Letter, Richard Solomon, Attorney-General's Office, Pretoria, to Enraght-Moony, February 19, 1904 (File No.: S.C.S. 99, SNA).

⁵⁸For the appointment of Judges from the Transvaal for the Special Criminal Court in

scholars of Swazi history regarding the status of Swaziland in its relation with South Africa.⁵⁹

The case became more complex when Percy S. Hoyle, an Attorney appointed by the colonial state to represent Bhunu's six widows,⁶⁰ confidentially wrote to the District Commandant officially informing him that he had information implicating Queen Regent Labotsibeni in the death of Bhunu's widow. He told him that he (Hoyle) was contemplating issuing instructions for "the arrest of the Queen Regent upon a charge of Murder, owing to revelations which would be made during the trial."⁶¹ Before Hoyle could do so, Enraght-Moony had an interview with him and he confirmed that he had evidence which would lead to Labotsibeni's arrest. However, he refused to show Enraght-Moony the evidence because the latter was a member of the Criminal Court.⁶² Hoyle's news about Labotsibeni caused the officials of the emerging colonial state to panic for they did not know how Labotsibeni would react to a warrant of arrest or a subpoena. These officials were also concerned about the reaction of the emaSwati to an

Swaziland in 1906, see Letter, Secretary to the Law Department, Attorney-General's Office, Pretoria, to M.R. Greenlees, Advocate, Pretoria, October 24, 1906 (S.C.S. 99, SNA).

⁵⁹I have discussed this confusion above in literature review, chapter one.

⁶⁰See Labotsibeni's and the Swazi Council's copy of a Petition for clemency of the six widows, Royal Kraal, Zombodze, to Lord Milner, Governor of the Transvaal Colony, April 11, 1904 (J28/1904, SNA).

⁶¹Confidential letter, Enraght-Moony, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, Mbabane, to the Acting Secretary for Swaziland, April 14, 1904 (Confidential File No.: J64/1904, SNA).

⁶²*Ibid.*

arrest of their leader.⁶³ The Secretary for Swaziland wrote the following to the Transvaal Attorney-General on Labotsibeni's situation:

As a Warrant of arrest or even a subpoena may be resisted in her [Labotsibeni] case I am directed by His excellency the Governor to request you to instruct the Judge President of the Special Criminal Court by telegraph in terms to the effect that no Warrant or writ should be issued on the evidence before consultation with the Special Commissioner who is to refer particulars as they may arise to me for the directions of His Excellency the Governor.⁶⁴

The Secretary for Swaziland ended his letter by stating that "the Queen may be induced to appear by verbal representations if wanted."⁶⁵ The possibility of issuing a warrant of arrest for Labotsibeni triggered a series of correspondences between British officials in Swaziland and in South Africa.⁶⁶ The above shows the deliberate and careful process by which the emerging colonial state handled potentially explosive situations in their attempts to subjugate Swazi leaders. Such a careful coordinated plan between the British officials in Swaziland and in South Africa shows the complex process involved in building a colonial state in a country where military conquest did not precede the establishment of a civilian rule. This also demonstrates the character of power relations between the emerging colonial state and the Swazi leadership under Labotsibeni.

⁶³Urgent & Confidential letter, Secretary for Swaziland to Sir Richard Solomon, Attorney-General, Pretoria, March 2, 1904 (J64/1904, SNA), and Confidential letter, Enraght-Moony, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, Mbabane, to the Acting Secretary for Swaziland, April 14, 1904 (Confidential File No.: J64/1904, SNA).

⁶⁴Urgent & Confidential letter, Secretary for Swaziland to Sir Richard Solomon, Attorney-General, Pretoria, March 2, 1904 (J64/1904, SNA).

⁶⁵*Ibid.*

⁶⁶See for example, a list of minutes in Confidential File No.: J64/1905, SNA.

In anticipation of Labotsibeni's refusal to appear in court, and like the Transvaal government's earlier action against the late Bhunu in April 1898, the Special Commissioner for Swaziland ordered an additional police force to be on stand-by along the Transvaal-Swaziland border.⁶⁷ Here then we had a classic situation of military force as an instrument used to shape power relations. Students of power relations have observed that force "is regularly employed by those who hold official power to compel obedience and suppress deviance."⁶⁸ Labotsibeni was not like the politically inexperienced late Paramount Chief Bhunu, who had fled to the British authorities in Natal after he had noticed a military built-up on the Transvaal-Swaziland border by the Transvaal government at the time he had been summoned by the Transvaal Boer government to appear in court following his alleged involvement in Nsibandze's murder in April 1898. Since her involvement in the politics of Swaziland from 1875 Labotsibeni had seen the demonstration of military force by Europeans in their dealings with the emaSwati. It could be argued that by now, she knew how to deal with Europeans even in the face of their military might. Thus, contrary to prior apprehension by the officials of the colonial state, she complied with the subpoena. Enraght-Moony reported that "her demeanour was most proper and respectful" throughout the duration of the Court's

⁶⁷Urgent & Confidential letter, Secretary for Swaziland, to Sir Richard Solomon, Attorney-General, Pretoria, March 2, 1904 (J64/1904, SNA). See also a confidential letter, Enraght-Moony, Mbabane, to The Acting Secretary for Swaziland, April 14, 1904, SNA).

⁶⁸Bruce Lincoln, Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 3.

proceedings.⁶⁹

Attorney Hoyle acting for Bhunu's widows, had insisted that Labotsibeni be summoned to court for he had claimed that he was in possession of an incriminating evidence against her, but he failed to produce such evidence in court. Thereafter, Enraght-Moony wrote confidentially to the Acting Secretary for Swaziland, and told him that since the state had failed to produce any incriminating evidence against Labotsibeni, no further action would be taken against her. However, Enraght-Moony confided to the Acting Secretary:

But, from secret information which I have received there is no doubt in my mind that, if she did not actually instigate the Murder committed by the aforesaid widows, the Queen Regent was perfectly well aware that it would be perpetrated and took no steps to prevent it. As it would be quite impossible to [to] prove any charge of complicity I am not taking any further steps in the matter.

It is very probable that Mr Hoyle had heard rumours to the same effect as my information, and had, in his ignorance of the secretive nature of these people, hoped to get his informant to openly denounce the Queen.⁷⁰

For our purpose here, whether Enraght-Moony and Hoyle had indeed reliable and genuine informants, who refused at the last hour to testify against Labotsibeni, is a moot point. What is significant are the implications for power relations between Labotsibeni and the colonial state as a result of the Court's failure to find Labotsibeni guilty of complicity. First, Labotsibeni's political stature as the leader of the emaSwati remained intact. In fact, this failure could be among the incidents which enhanced Labotsibeni's

⁶⁹Confidential letter, Enraght-Moony to The Acting Secretary for Swaziland, April 4, 1904 (J64/1904).

⁷⁰*Ibid.*

popularity and fear among the emaSwati, who perceived her as, in one poet's words, a "mamba which is not backed by [her] own king[.] It is barked at by strange powerful nations (British)[.]"⁷¹ Second, the colonial state's failure to produce evidence which directly implicated Labotsibeni in the murder of Bhunu's widow reveals how complex it was for Europeans to access the inner thoughts and plans of the Swazi precolonial political institution. The first time that Europeans were unable to do so was in 1898 when the Transvaal Boer colonial state attempted to blame Bhunu for Nsibandze's death, but failed to establish his direct involvement in that murder.⁷² Indeed, the Swazi precolonial political institution had continued be an *inqaba* (fortress), to use a word it uses to perceive itself, to both foreigners and the Swazi public.⁷³ For example, recently one scholar who had attempted to have an interview with the current King Mswati III for a book he was working on, but without success, remarked, "the Swazis were the Japanese of Africa, inscrutable, and their court impenetrable. To them, there were two types of

⁷¹Thoko Ginindza, "Labotsibeni/Gwamile Mdluli: The Power Behind the Swazi Throne, 1875-1925," in Flora Edouwaye S. Kaplan, ed., Queen, Queen Mothers, Priestesses, and Power: Case Studies in African Gender, Volume 810 (New York: The New York Academy of Sciences, 1997), p. 146. For poems on Swazi leaders: the early kings up and queen regents, including Labotsibeni to Sobhuza II, see T.T. Ginindza, Tibongo temakhosi netetiNdlovukazi (London: Longman, 1977).

⁷²See chapter six above for a brief discussion of this point, and Crush, Struggle, p. 44. For a fuller discussion of this incident, see Hamilton Sipho Simelane, "Swazi Resistance to Boer Penetration and Domination, 1881-1898," Transafrican Journal of History, 18 (1989), 136-141; Matsebula, History, pp. 164-167, and Genge, "Law," pp. 114-137.

⁷³On the use of the concept, *inqaba* (fortress) in a brief examination of the history of the Swazi monarchy from 1815 to 1983, see a less scholarly but insightful view in a piece without an author's name, "The Swazi monarchy: Siyinqaba (We are the fortress)," Africa Insight, Vol. 14, 1 (1984), 14-16.

white man: those of the past - the swindling concessionaires and insincere imperial officials - and those of the present - the half-naked South African tourists, down for the weekend to booze and gamble in the Ezulwini casinos."⁷⁴ Third, that Labotsibeni neither resisted the colonial state's call for her to appear in court, nor behaved in a confrontational manner in court both demonstrated her "prudence and insight"⁷⁵ in handling colonial politics without yielding her leadership position of the Swazi society to the colonial state. This sets her apart from her contemporaries elsewhere in southern Africa, who had adopted a confrontational approach to colonial politics and by so doing provided a colonial state with an excuse to either employ its military power on them or to send such leaders to exile.⁷⁶ Thus, by not adopting an open stance of resistance against the colonial state, like her son the late Paramount Chief Bhunu did against the Transvaal Boer government in 1898, Labotsibeni deprived the British officials of an opportunity to use the case of the six widows to refashion the political structure of the Swazi Council, which they had done in 1898 in Bhunu's case when the British and the Transvaal Boers signed the 1898 Protocol to the Anglo-Transvaal Convention of 1894. By means of the 1898 Protocol the Anglo-Transvaal governments had stripped Paramount Chief Bhunu of

⁷⁴Edward Fox, Obscure Kingdoms (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1993), p. 158.

⁷⁵Other scholars have observed these qualities in Labotsibeni, see Alan R. Booth, Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983), p. 15.

⁷⁶King Dinuzulu of Zululand is one such example of using confrontation in dealing with colonial politics. His son Paramount Chief Solomon, who succeeded his father to the Zulu throne, also adopted a confrontational approach to colonial politics. For a discussion of Solomon ka Dinuzulu, see Marks, Ambiguities, Chapter 1.

major administrative powers over his subjects and submerged him and the Swazi political institution directly under the Transvaal colonial state in Swaziland. Evidently, this time Labotsibeni had wished to avoid a repeat of the reconstruction of power relations by the British colonial state. For example, unlike Bhunu 1898, who had argued that the Transvaal colonial state had no jurisdiction to try him, Labotsibeni did not make the matter of a British colonial state's handling of this case an issue, although the incident had occurred in the jurisdiction of the Swazi Paramount Chieftaincy. That she did not raise an issue of jurisdiction demonstrates her political acumen and pragmatism in handling colonial politics. It also shows that she was fully self-conscious that Swaziland was a colony of Britain and had accepted a colonial situation, aware of the threat of force indicated by the colonial troops now mobilized along the Transvaal-Swaziland border .

The six widows, for their part, were sentenced to death on April 7, 1904 by the Special Criminal Court, subject to the Transvaal Governor's final word. When passing the sentence the President of the Court, Judge Rubie, is reported to have stated that "there was no proof of anything of witchcraft, or that accused had been directed to kill their victim by a superior."⁷⁷ Thus this judgement absolved Labotsibeni's name from any alleged involvement in this murder case. He is also reported to have said in announcing the judgement that "the law of the country was the same for princesses as it was for the humblest subject."⁷⁸ Evidently by this statement Judge Rubie had intend to inform his

⁷⁷"King Bunu's Widows, Six Sentenced to Death for Murder, A Brutal Crime. The Law Does Not Protect Royalty," *Rand Daily Mail*, April 9, 1904 (File No. J28/1904, SNA).

⁷⁸*Ibid.*

audience that the class privileges based on royal blood which had been a hallmark of Swazi society were now done away with by the British administration. However, subsequent events involving Swazi leaders which were aimed at retaining royal privileges showed that he had underestimated the class's ability to protect its group interests.

Labotsibeni and the Swazi Council sent a petition to Alfred Milner, High Commissioner and Governor of the Transvaal Colony, asking for mercy on behalf of the six condemned widows. The petitioners asked Milner to commute the death sentences to moderate imprisonment or penalty and based their request on six points. Among these were the following: They asked for a jail term, because Swazi women generally abhorred imprisonment, and therefore a jail sentence would still serve as a deterrent lesson in future for similar crimes.⁷⁹ They further wrote:

4. That while Petitioners fully endorse the sentences of the Special Criminal Court they nevertheless implore Your Excellency to exercise mercy for the sake of the Queen Regent and Nation who would be the greatest sufferers should the sentence passed on the six Chieftainesses [sic] be executed in its present form

These condemned Chieftainesses are members of one household and widows of the late Paramount Chief and to take away their lives would be inflicting the severest injury to the Queen Regent and Nation who still mourn his demise. It would mean the loss of eight souls to Swazi Royalty considering that the deceased Chieftain-ess [sic] was in family way.

5. That while the Queen Regent and Nation cordially thank the Government for having engaged an Advocate to appear for the condemned Prisoners they wish to direct Your Excellency's attention to the fact that the man so engaged [Hoyle] did not creditably execute his duties and his conduct throughout gave no satisfaction

⁷⁹A copy of the Petition of Labotsibeni Queen Regent of the Swazies, Lomawa, Queen Mother, Nogcogco Prince Regent, Malunge, Brother of the late Paramount Chief, Ngwane Jokovu, Alpheus Nkosi, and others on behalf of the condemned Prisoners, Royal Kraal, Zombodze, to His excellency, Lord Milner, Governor of the Transvaal Colony, April 11, 1904 (J28/1904, SNA).

he having been more or less under the influence of intemperance.⁸⁰

The petitioners concluded their petition by reminding Milner that the crime took place before Swaziland became a British colony administered through the laws of the Transvaal colony.⁸¹

Apart from the point that whoever had helped the Swazi to draft this petition, at least, to write it in English, was a believer in the supremacy of the British legal system and its 'civilizing mission', hence the petition was well packaged for Milner's consideration. Indeed, Enraght-Moony, Special Commissioner for Swaziland, through whose office the petition was sent to Milner, wrote a cover letter to the petition in which he recommended to Milner the approval of the petitioners' request. Enraght-Moony wrote, "while I consider that the Execution of the Capital sentence would have an excellent effect as a deterrent object lesson upon the Swazis who view the taking of human life very lightly, I do not think that in the cases of the women recently convicted by the Special Criminal Court that object would be served."⁸² He pointed out that since Swaziland had just been placed under the British rule, the emaSwati were as yet to realize the strictness of the British law, especially to with regard to crimes associated with 'witchcraft' beliefs like in the present case of Bhunu's widows. In his recommendation for clemency to Milner, Enraght-Moony wrote, "if the Governor decides to exercise his

⁸⁰*Ibid.*

⁸¹*Ibid.*

⁸²Letter, Enraght-Moony, to Acting Secretary, Swaziland Affairs, April 14, 1904 (J28/1904, SNA).

Prerogative and to commute the sentences I would suggest, if I may, imprisonment of Bunu's widows for a term of 15 years."⁸³ Milner commuted the death sentences of all these women "to seven years imprisonment with hard labour," and Labotsibeni and Swazi Council were informed accordingly.⁸⁴

It could be argued that this clemency had strengthened Labotsibeni's leadership position, at least, in the eyes of the Swazi aristocracy. The clemency saved the royal house from a loss of six lives. Thus the members of the royal house continued to enjoy some privileges of power under the British colonial state, though with major restrictions. The trial of these six widows of the royal house provided a clear indication of the ascendancy of the colonial state over the Swazi authority in Swaziland. Labotsibeni and the Swazi Council did not contest the supremacy of the colonial state at this point. Yet, by summoning her to court and not finding her implicated in the murder case, this trial established the basis for cooperation of the colonial state and the Swazi authorities. In fact, the Special Criminal Court of 1904 had called upon Labotsibeni as a witness for the defense in a case involving three women charged with murder due to 'witchcraft' allegations of another women in the Hlatikulu district. Labotsibeni's main duty was to advise the court the Swazi legal traditions.⁸⁵ She is reported to have told the court that

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Registered mail, Secretary for Swaziland, to The Special Commissioner for Swaziland, May 16, 1904 (J28/1904, SNA). See also letter, Secretary for Swaziland, to The Secretary to the Law Department, May 16, 1904 (J28/1904, SNA).

⁸⁵ Other scholars have observed the similar use of indigenous authorities by colonial officials in West Africa in colonial Senegal, where the French colonial authorities had

"the Swazi custom was for natives to report to the king cases of witchcraft. Witch-doctors were then ordered to proceed to the place, and, after smelling out, kill off the witch. In this case, no report was made."⁸⁶ Therefore, in this previous case Labotsibeni did not plead for lenient judgement for these women, probably because they did not report the case to her office, or that they did not belong to the Swazi royalty. The Special Criminal Court sentenced the three women to death on the same day it passed its verdict on the case of the late Bhunu's six widows.⁸⁷ However, later Milner also commuted their sentences commuted to seven years imprisonment with hard labor.⁸⁸

Appeals in Civil Disputes Between Swazi Complainants

With the jurisdiction to handle criminal cases taken over by the colonial state, Labotsibeni and the Swazi Council concentrated on preserving the little legal power they still had over the emaSwati on civil matters. Like in most British colonial African chiefdoms, the Swazi leaders had been allowed to retain some semblance of power over civil disputes which involved only their subjects. For the case of the Swazi leaders, their

used the services of the Muslim tribunals to guide the French tribunals on Muslim legal traditions. For a discussion of this point, see 0

⁸⁶"The Swaziland Murder. Three Native Women on Trial. Evidence of the Queen Regent," *Rand Daily Mail*, April 7, 1904 (J28/1904, SNA).

⁸⁷"Swaziland Murder. Three Women Receive the Death Sentence. Quaint Native Custom," *Rand Daily Mail*, April 8, 1904 (J28/1904, SNA)

⁸⁸Letter, Secretary for Swaziland, to The Special Commissioner for Swaziland, May 16, 1904 (J28/1904, SNA). See also a letter, Secretary for Swaziland, to J.F. Rubie, Pretoria, May 16, 1904 (J28/1904, SNA).

jurisdiction in civil disputes within the Swazi society had been guaranteed by the British and Transvaal governments in the 1898 Protocol to the Anglo-Transvaal Convention of 1894.⁸⁹ This guarantee was repeated by the British government in 1903 and in subsequent proclamations related to the British rule in Swaziland. For example, Clause six of the Swaziland Order-in-Council Proclamation of June 25, 1903 stated, "Subject to the foregoing provisions the Paramount Chief and other Native Chiefs shall continue to exercise jurisdiction according to Native laws and customs in all civil disputes in which Natives only are concerned."⁹⁰

This arrangement and the intentions behind it could be interpreted variously. Here I want to suggest that from the beginning when such a clause was inserted by the Anglo-Transvaal governments in their numerous conventions on Swaziland and by the British government during its colonial era in twentieth-century Swaziland, it had an effect of coopting the Swazi political class into a colonial agenda regarding the Swazi masses. This was so, because this arrangement had ensured the Swazi political class a continued exercise of its power, though in a very constrained way, over the emaSwati.

In early twentieth-century Swaziland, the British colonial state began to encroach upon this limited power over the Swazi political class by appropriating from it the right of appeal in civil cases which exclusively involved its subjects. By doing so, the colonial

⁸⁹See chapter six above. In fact, such guarantees by Anglo-Transvaal governments go as far back as 1890 when the first Anglo-Transvaal Convention on the affairs of Swaziland was signed by these powers.

⁹⁰Swaziland Order-in-Council: Proclamation, June 25, 1903 (J183/1903, SNA).

state had began to undermine the power of the Swazi ruling class over the emaSwati. It was a realization of this which led Labotsibeni and her Council to complain to the Special Commissioner, "Sir, we complain under our Shade we say the sun is burning us....(a) Sir, we ask where do we rule, if our people do not obey the Law and customs of our nation?"⁹¹

As long as the Swazi Paramount Chieftaincy, and during the time of this regency, Queen Regent Labotsibeni, had enjoyed the uncontested power of appeal from the decisions of the Swazi chiefs, she had absolute power over the emaSwati. However, as soon as the colonial state officials began to make inroads into such an absolute power by taking away the right of appeal from her, she realized that she and her Council could no longer control the emaSwati. Of course, control is one of the crucial aspects of political power.⁹² As a political head of the Swazi Council (Paramount Chieftaincy) Labotsibeni had devoted her energy to negotiating with the colonial state for the Paramount Chieftaincy to have the right of appeal for civil cases tried by its chiefs and for the Chieftaincy to enjoy an unparalleled power in handling civil disputes among her subjects. Thus she wanted absolute power over her subjects. Now I turn to analyze incidents of such cases.

It is necessary to have an idea of the structure of the British colonial administration in Swaziland in order to understand the following analysis. Once the colonial state had taken shape the hierarchy had two main functionaries for administrative purposes: Resident Commissioner (Special Commissioner) and the Assistant

⁹¹Complaints of Queen to the Special Commissioner (RCS 732/13).

⁹²See chapter one above for my discussion of this point.

Commissioners. The Resident Commissioner was based in Mbabane, which was the headquarters of the British colonial state.⁹³ Assistant Commissioners administered the districts and reported back to the Resident Commissioner in Mbabane. There were five colonial districts with their administrative centers by 1907, namely Mbabane; Mankiana; Hlatikhulu; Ubombo, its administrative center was Stegi; Peak, its administrative center was Piggs Peak.⁹⁴

Since their involvement in the colonial administration the Assistant Commissioners in the districts had been in conflict with Swazi chiefs over matters of legal jurisdiction in civil cases. The various colonial administrators had attempted to define and redefine the powers of the Assistant Commissioners versus those of the chiefs. The Swazi Council, for its part, had strenuously protested any inroads into its jurisdiction over Swazi society. For example, on December 30, 1904, Labotsibeni and the Swazi Council sent a petition to Milner in which they protested against all the clauses of Proclamation No. 3 of 1904, which was an instrument intended to be a blueprint for the British colonial rule in Swaziland. With regard to the jurisdiction of chiefs, Clause 6 of the Proclamation stated:

⁹³We will recall that the Transvaal Boer administration had its headquarters in Breimersdorp, the present day town called Manzini. Breimersdorp was destroyed during the South African War, 1899-1902.

⁹⁴For a map which shows these districts and their administrative centers, see Jonathan Crush, The Struggle for Swazi Labour, 1890-1920 (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), p. 62. I have not written the names of the administrative centers for the other districts, for the names are the same as the districts.

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding in the foregoing provisions, the Paramount Chief and other Native Chiefs shall continue to exercise jurisdiction according to Native laws and customs in civil disputes in which aboriginal Natives only are concerned; provided always that it shall be competent for any party to any such civil dispute to appeal from the decision of any such Chief as aforesaid to the Resident Magistrate, whose decision on such Appeal shall be final.⁹⁵

Labotsibeni and her Council protested vehemently against this Clause, when they said: "We feel very strongly that this is a blow at the power and authority of our Chiefs and Paramount Chief inasmuch as it will rob them of the authority at present held by them over the people and will tend to make the people disrespect those who have hitherto been in authority over them and to whose authority they have hitherto bowed with every deference."⁹⁶ Apart from the obvious meaning of this statement, i.e., the Swazi Council was concerned that the said Clause had taken away their power over the emaSwati, and the Council protested such a loss, there is another important interpretation of the Council's response. The Swazi Council was aware that the emaSwati had so far been grudgingly showing allegiance and loyalty to the chiefs and the Council because of their fear of legal punishment from these Swazi authorities. This supports my earlier contention in this work that Swazi kings had always imposed their will on the emaSwati, and that the Dlamini aristocracy's rule over the emaSwati had indeed never cleansed itself of its earlier features of being a colonial power over the indigenous people it had

⁹⁵This Clause is quoted in Labotsibeni and the Swazi Council's Petition, Zombodze Royal Kraal, to Alfred Milner, High Commissioner for South Africa and Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Transvaal and Orange River Colonies, December 30, 1904 (J146/1906, SNA).

⁹⁶*Ibid.*

conquered during its early settlement in the area.

The second point advanced by Labotsibeni and the Council against Clause 6 above was equally loaded with meaning. They pointed out to Milner that:

We are fully convinced that Appeals from the decisions of Chiefs would tend to promote litigation amongst our people thereby wasting time and money needlessly, and they would also have the effect, in many cases, of creating and fostering bad feeling and enmity between the parties, whereas *all our people have confidence in their Chiefs and decisions by them finally close all disputes*. Such a right of Appeal would also tend to *lessen the authority of the Chiefs and to reduce the respect to which they are entitled*.⁹⁷

Besides the intended meaning of the Council in these statements, namely that the Council did not want to lose the right of appeal to the Resident Magistrate, the statements beg more questions. If all the emaSwati had trust in their Chiefs as the Council claimed, why then did they worry about the chiefs losing respect from their constituencies? If the chiefs decisions were fair and equitable why then worry about potential litigations should the emaSwati be allowed to appeal such decisions elsewhere away from the purview of the chiefly and Council's power? If the chiefs and Council members were 'entitled' to an appreciation from the emaSwati, what sort of an entitlement was that which required a rule of law to be enforced on the people, and why execute it by law? Here I wish to suggest that rather than merely accepting the legitimate concerns expressed by Labotsibeni and her Council in these protests against the Proclamation No. 3 of 1904, scholars ought to probe further the implications of such protests for the ordinary Swazi people, whose voices were not privileged to express their plight both against the Swazi

⁹⁷*Ibid.* Emphasis added.

leaders and the colonial authorities whose decisions ultimately affected them. Although the ordinary Swazi people had no privilege or opportunity to generate written accounts of their lives under both their leaders's rule and that of the colonial state, historians may reconstruct the history of this group by a close reading of sources generated by the two dominant groups: Swazi leaders and the colonial state.

Labotsibeni and the Council concluded their petition to Milner on the above subject, by stating that, "our Nation desires that all civil suits be tried by the Chiefs of the several districts with the right of Appeal to the Swazie King or Paramount Chief."⁹⁸ A minor quibble is in order here. There was no Swazi King nor one in the making by this time, thus to talk of a right of appeal to a "Swazi King" was to obscure the degree to which colonialism had done away with the era of kings in Swaziland, at least for the duration of the colonial rule until 1968. However, their intentions in reviving the label of King suggests that they had not given up a fight for the restoration of their kingdom from colonial rule. Maybe a reference to a Swazi King was also an indication of a hidden transcript being exposed in public. The Council's need for the Paramount Chief to retain the right of Appeal from the decisions of the chiefs proved to be a thorny issue between the colonial state and Council until long after Labotsibeni had left politics in 1921 and after her death in 1925. The following discussion focuses on the manner in which a tug of war had developed between the officials of the colonial state and the Swazi Council under Labotsibeni's leadership.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*

In 1907 Robert Thorne Coryndon,⁹⁹ Resident Commissioner, issued a Circular to his Assistant Commissioners for their comments on his suggestions for procedures in dealing with appeals in civil cases pertaining to the emSwati. In this circular the Resident Commissioner addressed in particular the position of the Queen Regent's Court and his own with regard to appeals in civil cases. Since this document forms the basis of subsequent discussions on its subject by both the Assistant Commissioners and Labotsibeni, it is useful to quote it at length. Coryndon wrote:

1. Notice of Appeal from the judgment of any chief to the Court of the Regent must be given within 20 days of the delivery of judgment to the Assistant Commissioner of the District in which the appellant resides. The Assistant Commissioner will summon the parties and witnesses and will send them in charge of an official Messenger to the Zombode. He will invite the assistance of any other Assistant Commissioner in whose district one of the parties or witnesses may reside. Should notice of Appeal as above be given after the period specified the Assistant Commissioner should report the circumstances to the Resident Commissioner with his recommendations, and the Resident Commissioner will decide whether the Appeal may be heard.

After delivering judgement the Regent will inform the official Messenger of her finding and the latter will report the same to the Assistant Commissioner.

2. Appeals from the Regent's Court to the Court of the Resident Commissioner should be similarly notified by the Appellant to the Assistant Commissioner under whom he resides. The latter will notify the Registrar of the Resident Commissioner's Court who in his turn will inform the Assistant Commissioner of the date set down for hearing. The latter will send the parties and witnesses to the Assistant Commissioner, Mbabane, in time to be produced for the hearing. The Registrar will also notify the Assistant Commissioner, Mbabane, of the date of hearing and the latter officer will communicate the same to the Regent.

Subsequently the Registrar will inform the Assistant Commissioner to whom Notice of Appeal may have been given of the finding of the Court. Late notices of Appeal under this paragraph will be treated in a similar manner as mentioned in

⁹⁹For history of the career of Coryndon which provides a useful background for one's understanding of his work in Swaziland, see Peter Duignan, "Sir Robert Coryndon (1870-1925)," in L.H. Gann and Peter Duignan, eds., African Proconsuls: European Governors in Africa (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1978), pp. 313-352.

paragraph 1.¹⁰⁰

Apart from the legal jargon in this quote, Coryndon was evidently making himself the final authority on legal matters which involved only the Swazi people. These proposals echo J. Smuts' suggestions which he made in 1901 regarding the position of the paramount chief and the appeals in Swazi case.¹⁰¹ Assistant Commissioners' responses to this Circular revealed what was going on at the district level with regard to the emaSwati's perception of the colonial authority. A.G. Marwick, the Acting Assistant Commissioner for Hlatikhulu district, commented that "the want of jurisdiction by Assistant Commissioners in Civil Cases has already done harm to their prestige amongst the Natives."¹⁰² He also observed that Coryndon's proposals, particularly number one, would turn the Assistant Commissioner into Labotsibeni's Court messengers. By so doing, the Assistant Commissioners "would thus be further cheapened in the eyes of the native and the Chief Regent be further elevated above them."¹⁰³ Coryndon disagreed with Marwick, for in Coryndon's view, the Swazi leaders "would not look at it in these lights at all."¹⁰⁴ Apart from this perception Coryndon did not deem it proper to deprive the

¹⁰⁰"Appeals in Civil Cases (Native), Circular No. 24, Government Secretary, Mbabane, to all Assistant Commissioners, May 28, 1907 (RCS 114/14, SNA).

¹⁰¹See above,

¹⁰²Letter of response to Circular No. 24/1907, A.G. Marwick, Acting Assistant Commissioner, Hlatikhulu, to the Government Secretary, June 3, 1907 (RCS 114/14).

¹⁰³*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴Letter ref. Circular No. 24 of 1907, Government Secretary, to The Assistant Commissioner, Hlatikhulu, June 22, 1907 (RCS 114/14).

chiefs of their rights to administer the civil jurisdiction, rights which were guaranteed in the Swaziland Administration Proclamation of 1907.¹⁰⁵ Coryndon's view that Swazi leaders would not attach a similar interpretation as suggested by Marwick reveals his arrogance and condescension toward the Swazi leaders, a patronizing attitude which was prevalent in British colonial Africa.

B.H. Warner, Acting Assistant Commissioner, Mbabane, expressed similar opinions like Marwick. He pointed out a need to improve the existing position of Assistant Commissioners as far as Swazi Civil cases were concerned. Warner stated, "it seems to me that as they [Assistant Commissioners] are precluded from hearing Civil Cases between Swazi & Swazi they probably lose a certain amount of prestige and their authority would be better shown if the first appeal from the Chief Regent was to them with a further appeal to the Resident Commissioner."¹⁰⁶ However, he did not wish to press this point too much, because of his fear that it would mean an amendment to the 1907 Proclamation.¹⁰⁷

Coryndon had also made a verbal request to Captain Gilson, Mbabane Police, to comment on Circular No. 24 of May 28, 1907. Gilson suggested, "that Appeals from Paramount [Chief] be tried by Assistant Commissioners of the District where appellant [sic] resides and that Appeals from Assistant Commissioner[']s Court be taken to

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶Letter ref. Circular No. 24 of May 28, 1907, B. H. Warner, Acting Assistant Commissioner, Mbabane, to the Government Secretary, July 2, 1907 (RCS 114/14).

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*

Resident Commissioner."¹⁰⁸ He based his recommendation on the following grounds:

- (1) Assistant Commissioners are at the present time looked upon by the Natives as oppressors, as all they do, (from the Natives point of view) is to try and punish them for Criminal offences and relieve them of their money in the shape of collecting Hut Tax[.] When a Native goes to the District Officer for help in a Civil matter he is told to go on to the Paramount, and after that to the Resident Commissioner,
- (2) It would strengthen the authority of the District Officer.
- (3) It would relieve the work in the Resident Commissioner[']s Office as there would be fewer appeals; and when they did come up they would be in writing and more lucid.
- (4) Under the present Circular the Assistant Commissioner is merely the Messenger and Recorder of the Paramount Court.¹⁰⁹

Before commenting on the above views by Assistant Commissioners let me review the Swazi Council's views on the subject. After getting the feedback from the Assistant Commissioners, Coryndon drafted a Proclamation on Appeals on civil cases among the emaSwati and sent the draft to Labotsibeni and her son Malunge for their remarks. He sent A.G. Marwick to explain the draft Proclamation to Malunge. Malunge told Marwick that the draft Proclamation had serious limitations. It did not give Labotsibeni power to discipline actions in contempt of court, a power which was enjoyed by chiefs in Natal and Zululand.¹¹⁰ Malunge considered the power to punish for contempt of court "very necessary in order to preserve to the Chiefs their dignity & the respect of

¹⁰⁸Letter ref. Circular No. 24 of May 28, 1907, Captain Gilson, Mbabane Police, to The Government Secretary, Mbabane, June 20, 1907 (RCS 114/14).

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*

¹¹⁰Letter, Malunge's response as written by A.G. Marwick, to Coryndon's draft Proclamation re: Appeals in Civil Cases between a Swazi and a Swazi, Mbabane, March 1913 (RCS 114/14).

their people."¹¹¹ He told Marwick that the lack of power to fine for contempt of court had the effect of "daily lessening the prestige of the chiefs & making their civil jurisdiction a laughing stock."¹¹² He also pointed out that powers of the paramount chief ought to be more than that of an ordinary chief.¹¹³ Thus Malunge rejected the whole draft Proclamation because it had not provided the Queen Regent and chiefs with sufficient power to control their subjects.

In 1914 D. Honey, the Resident Commissioner, wrote again to Labotsibeni herself soliciting her views on the draft Proclamation before sending it to the High Commissioner for final decision. He briefed her on son's (Malunge) response. However, in an apparent attempt to cloud the main issues of the draft Proclamation, Honey told Labotsibeni that he would make sure that the Assistant Commissioners would not try civil case between the emaSwati unless they first had taken the case to their chiefs.¹¹⁴ Apart from its ambiguity, this point had not been part of the draft Proclamation. Perhaps Honey included it as a cheap way to appease Labotsibeni. On Malunge's point that chiefs ought to have the power to fine for the contempt of court, Honey told Labotsibeni that "contempt of Court is a criminal offence which is punishable by fine or imprisonment and

¹¹¹*Ibid.*

¹¹²*Ibid.*

¹¹³*Ibid.*

¹¹⁴Letter, D. Honey, Resident Commissioner, to the Chief Regent, Labotsibeni, February 11, 1914 (RCS 114/14/155, SNA).

is not a civil matter.”¹¹⁵ However, he ensured her that the Proclamation had a provision for an offence of contempt of a chief’s court to be tried by the Assistant Commissioner of the district. He further told her that the Proclamation still permitted the Paramount Chief a power to handle cases brought to him or to try appeals from the chiefs. However, in either way the appeal resided with the Resident Commissioner.¹¹⁶ This last point was precisely the main issue in dispute between the Swazi Council and the officials of the colonial state with regard to the argument on appeals in civil cases among the emaSwati. The central point of difference between the colonial state and Swazi Council had been the allocation of the final authority on legal affairs of the emaSwati to the Queen Regent or to the Resident Commissioner. This was the crux of this power game over civil jurisdiction for cases among the emaSwati. Neither Labotsibeni nor the Resident Commissioner was willing to give in their holds on this crucial right of exercising the last word in the jurisdiction of civil cases between a Swazi and a Swazi.

However, the colonial state had an upper-hand in this struggle for supremacy over appeals in civil cases involving only the Swazi people. In 1915 the Acting Resident Commissioner sent a circular to Assistant Commissioners in which he asserted the dominance of the Resident Commissioner’s and the Assistant Commissioners’s final words in appeal cases over Labotsibeni’s authority. E.F. Walters wrote the following on behalf of the Acting Resident Commissioner to the Assistant Commissioners, “A

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*

judgment obtained in the Assistant Commissioner's Court cannot be upset by a judgment of the Chief Regent on appeal. In such cases appeal would lie to the Resident Commissioner, but it is not desirable to interfere with the custom of appeal to the Chief Regent."¹¹⁷ However, the last clause of the above quotation left the door open for Labotsibeni to handle appeal cases from her people should they choose to take them to her Court. Indeed, in 1919 a judgment of the Special Court in an Appeal case on a matter of a chief's right of an exclusively jurisdiction in civil cases which concerned the emaSwati alone, reiterated the option of a Swazi person to choose to appeal either to Labotsibeni or to the Resident Commissioner or Assistant Commissioners. According the judgment of the Special Court, Section 17 of the Swaziland Administration Proclamation 1907 had a provision for emaSwati "who desire to have their dispute with other natives adjudicated upon according to native law and custom."¹¹⁸ However, having mentioned this option, the Special Court also pointed out an important condition for consideration by those who might wish explore the above option. That, "the Court, however, thinks it right to say that the existence of a concurrent jurisdiction [Labotsibeni's and the Resident Commissioner's] such as established here according to its interpretation of the Proclamation, does not enable a litigant who has chosen one

¹¹⁷Circular No. 10, from E.F. Walters, for Government Secretary, Mbabane, to all Assistant Commissioners and R.J.P. [Resident Justice of the Peace], Bremersdorp, March 10, 1915 (R.C.S. 486/11).

¹¹⁸Circular No. 6 or 8 (writing not clear in the original) with a copy of a Judgment of the Special Court, from B. Nicholson, Government Secretary, Mbabane, to all Assistant Commissioners & Resident Justice of the Peace, November 14, 1919 (R.C.S. 791/19, SNA).

particular forum to transfer his cause [case] subsequently to another while it is still pending."¹¹⁹

In fact, in saying the above, the Special Court was speaking directly to Labotsibeni's objection through a certain Blakeway who was apparently her attorney appearing before this Special Court. On behalf of Labotsibeni, Blakeway had objected against an Assistant Commissioner's court's attempt to handle a case which was already awaiting her decision.¹²⁰ These views of this Special Court demonstrate that legal struggle on the issue of appeal in civil cases which concerned only the emaSwati was far from over. It was never resolved during Labotsibeni's lifetime. In fact, Labotsibeni had passed on her resistant spirit regarding fighting for the Swazi Council's right of jurisdiction to try cases of the emaSwati to her grandson Paramount Chief Sobhuza II and his mother, the Queen Mother Lomawa in 1921 when Sobhuza attained his majority and resumed his leadership role for the emaSwati in colonial Swaziland.

What I have discussed above was a triangular attempt to reconstruct power relations by the Resident Commissioner, Assistant Commissioners, and the Swazi Council on a legal sphere in order to control the Swazi masses. The ordinary Swazi people were the ones upon whom the reconstructed power was to be applied. A common point from both the Assistant Commissioners and Malunge in their comments on the Resident Commissioner's Circular which defined the procedure for handling appeals from

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*

¹²⁰*Ibid.*

civil cases was their concern about matters of prestige in the eyes of the emaSwati. Both wanted to maintain a dignified appearance to the people over whom they exercised power. This illustrates that concerns about prestige and domination had been common features for both the officials of the colonial state and the precolonial political class of the colonized people. Other scholars have observed that the provincial administrators of the colonial state were preoccupied with the notions of prestige and domination.¹²¹ In this discussion I have shown that the precolonial political class of the colonized people was similarly concerned with the concept of prestige. Therefore we can conclude that a concern about prestige was a common phenomenon with those in positions of power in general. In this discussion I have demonstrated that the theoretical construction of the colonial order was as significant as the actual implementation of that order on the society.

Several points ought to be emphasized regarding the Swazi leaders' contestation against the colonial state to protect their rights to have a final say in the affairs which pertained exclusively to the emaSwati. The Swazi Council's insistence on their right to absolute rule over the emaSwati had introduced confusion on the nature of the colonial state in Swaziland, because in their arguments for retention of what they perceived to have been their 'traditional' legal right or entitlement to rule their subjects, they completely overlooked the point that they and their subjects were now all colonized people under British rule. For example, a British legal adviser had informed the Imperial Secretary that although the Swazi Council had cited Section 17 of the Swaziland

¹²¹Berman, Crisis & Control in Colonial Kenya, pp. 202-208.

Administration Proclamation for its claim to rights of jurisdiction for chiefs, the Council had no right to claim the exercise of legal powers it had possessed during its days of independence.¹²² Yet on the ground both the ordinary people and some chiefs had realized that colonialism was a reality and that the Swazi Council had completely lost its precolonial ability and instruments to enforce its decisions. This was the situation in which Labotsibeni and the Swazi Council were placed. Whatever semblance of power they thought to have depended on the instruments of power of the colonial state to be realized. Otherwise, the whole point of Labotsibeni and the Council making countless claims to be rulers of what was once their subjects was an illusion, which could only be maintained with the cooperation of the colonial state. Theirs was an exercise in delusion, but they could not deceive all the emaSwati or other chiefs that they were still the absolute rulers of Swaziland.

From the 1910s onward Labotsibeni and her Council had realized that the colonial state had stripped them of all their 'traditional' instruments of statecraft, i.e., elements to enforce the state's power over their subjects. They had realized that it was becoming difficult for them to impose fines or penalties on offenders with a certainty that offenders would pay. They also had no other alternative to deal with lawbreakers particularly when

¹²²R. Feetham's legal opinion titled, "Jurisdiction of Native Chiefs under Section 17 of the Swaziland Administration Proclamation, 1907," to the Imperial Secretary, November 3, 1911, attached to Circular No. 10 of 1915 on Appeals from Judgment of Chiefs to the Chief Regent and to the Resident Commissioner (R.C.S. 486/11, SNA). See also cover letter No. 181, for Feetham's opinions, from the Imperial Secretary, High Commissioner's Office, Pretoria, to the Resident Commissioner, Mbabane, November 27, 1911 (R.C.S. 486/11). Feetham was the Legal Advisor for the High Commissioner, Pretoria.

such offenders disobeyed judgments of Labotsibeni and her chiefs' courts, except to cooperate with the officials of the colonial state. From the precolonial to colonial times, for our purposes up to the end of Labotsibeni's era, there were always chiefs who did not always agree with or obey orders from the center (Swazi National Council). The actions of such chiefs, especially their tendencies to ignore Labotsibeni's orders for them to attend her meetings at her headquarters at Zombodze began to concern her greatly from 1915 onward. Since by this time the colonial state had dispossessed her of any tools of power for enforcement of her authority over the defiant chiefs she turned to the colonial state and asked it to restrain the unruly chiefs. And the colonial state complied with her request.¹²³ However, the subject of power relations between Labotsibeni and her chiefs in early twentieth-century colonial Swaziland would require another study. Therefore, I leave out this theme from the present work. For their part, the ordinary Swazi people had realized that the authority of the colonial state in the shape of the Resident Commissioner and the Assistant Commissioners was superior to that of Labotsibeni and her Council.

¹²³See, letter from Labotsibeni to the Acting Resident Commissioner, Mbabane, May 28, 1915; Letter from D. Honey, Acting Resident Commissioner, to the Chief Regent, Zombodze, May 31, 1915; Letter, Assistant Commissioner, Ubombo, to the Government Secretary, May 22, 1915. This letter (of May 22) contains the names of the chiefs whom the Assistant Commissioner had sent them with a Swazi police escort to appear before Labotsibeni. Thereafter, these chiefs were to report to the Acting Resident Commissioner in Mbabane for an interview with him. Letter, T.A. Steward, Government Secretary, to the Assistant Commissioner, Ubombo, May 31, 1915; Circular No. 18, from T.A. Steward, for Government Secretary, to all Assistant Commissioners and Resident Justice of the Peace, Bremersdorp, April 16, 1915. Attached to this letter (April 16) is a list of the chiefs who had neither attended nor sent representatives to meetings with the Assistant Commissioners and the Justice of the Peace. D.H. Horveel, Deputy- Assistant Commissioner, Mankaiana, to the Government Secretary, June 14, 1915. (All these documents are in File R.C.S. 126/15, SNA.)

Consequently, the ordinary Swazi people took their cases, especially cases on appeal, to Assistant Commissioners for final decisions.

It was in this context that Labotsibeni and her Council took their complaints to the Special Commissioner. They asked him, "where is the power of our Sovereignty? Because by this [appeal to European-style courts] we see that our power is being diminished [sic], and natives disregard our Sovereignty. This is the first mark of the sun burning us."¹²⁴ They also complained about their lack of legal tools to enforce their penalties to criminals. They told the Special Commissioner, "we complain very much under our Shade, we ask where is our power to punish wrong doers; what is punishment for those who disobey and other wrong doers who ought to be punished by our Sovereignty? Where is the awe of our Sovereignty? [A]s evil doers now disregard us and look to the white Court. Where are the powers that were given to us?"¹²⁵

The government's response to the above complaints restricted itself to the narrow context from which Labotsibeni and her Council had framed the complaints. The colonial government responded as follows:

All cases between Native and Native are free to be tried by the usual Native tribunals but appeals to European Courts cannot be denied. Government will not refuse people this. If Natives disobey lawful orders or summonses they can be punished, but such punishment must be discriminately inflicted. The Special Commissioner is prepared to uphold Queen's authority when justly exercised. People must not be driven away from their homes unless for some weighty reason which must be properly proved by evidence. Drivings away upon charges of

¹²⁴Complaints of Queen [Labotsibeni] to the Special Commissioner, with Precise of Replies (R.C.S. 732/13).

¹²⁵*Ibid.*

witchcraft or at instance of Diviners cannot be allowed.¹²⁶

This response shows that the colonial state was now confident of its position in Swaziland. It was an unambiguous response in the sense that it clearly indicated that the colonial state would offer its services to uphold the decisions of Labotsibeni and her chiefs only if they would shed certain practices from their 'traditional' system of justice. However, both Labotsibeni's constituency and that of the colonial state omitted an important aspect in their dialogue, namely that Swaziland was now a colonial state and it was misleading for Labotsibeni and her Council to talk of 'sovereignty' for Swazi rulers. The neglect of the colonial state officials to inform Labotsibeni about this colonial reality, and Labotsibeni and her Council's reference to their 'Sovereignty' as if they did not know that they were no longer independent, had led to numerous ambiguous encounters between two groups. The encounters could have been avoided, had the two sides been frank to each other about the existence of the colonial situation and its implication, especially with regard to power relations in the country. It is curious that the Swazi leaders had continued to refer to their independence as if they were not aware that they were now living under the rule of another government. This puzzle becomes complex when one considers that Labotsibeni and her Council had even told the Special Commissioner about the presence of the British government in Swaziland. They informed him on the same list of complaints, "Sir, we like the Government we are under,

¹²⁶*Ibid.*

and we are full of confidence that the Government will put right all our troubles."¹²⁷

Here one can offer few observations for the persistence of an illusion of independence for Labotsibeni and her Council. It is perhaps indeed that the British colonial state had failed to do what its Special Commissioner had noticed as recently as in 1903 as a major difficulty in dealing with the Swazi leaders and had claimed to be working to eradicate it. He had noted that the "true desire" of Labotsibeni and her Council "has no doubt always been, to have British protection from outside interference with the enjoyment of complete and uncontrolled internal independence in the exercise of their own barbarous regime."¹²⁸ The Special Commissioner, however, did not leave the Swazi leaders to freely entertain their idea of independence, as he told his seniors, "in all my dealings and communications with the Chiefs or Councillors, I have systematically endeavoured to dispel this erroneous idea of independence as a nation."¹²⁹ He had also observed that the notion of Swazi independence was further strengthened by "the intrigues of unscrupulous whites."¹³⁰ Balam Nyeko has written an unpublished paper on the role of European and non-Swazi educated African advisers on Swazi leaders's dealing with the British colonial rule during the period, 1904 to 1930s.¹³¹ However, there is still a

¹²⁷*Ibid.*

¹²⁸Minute Paper. Special Commissioner for Swaziland. Forwarding Report on the condition of Swaziland, March 3, 1903 (J64/03, SNA).

¹²⁹*Ibid.*

¹³⁰*Ibid.*

¹³¹B.H.L. Nyeko, "The Influence of Foreign Advisers and Educated Africans Upon the

need for more research on this important aspect of the history of colonialism in Swaziland, and I do not propose to discuss it in this study.

Labotsibeni and her Council could also have continued to refer to themselves as an independent entity within a colonial state, either for reasons of their own survival as a political class or it was because of the sheer attraction of power and a natural human inclination to cling to power unless one is forced out of it. Alternatively, perhaps it was a strategy to reinforce legitimacy of the royal house in a hidden transcript. There are few, if there any, examples in Africa of families of the precolonial leaders or leaders themselves who lost their political power to a European colonial power and thereafter were completely content within the status of being out of power. Both the precolonial rulers and the European colonizers appeared to have realized that it was not easy to remove completely the power of royal power families.

Once Labotsibeni and her Council had realized that they could no longer wrestle with the colonial state with regard to regaining instruments to enforce their courts' judgments on the emaSwati, they then turned around to the colonial state and asked it to execute their judgments on the Swazi people who disobeyed them. By so doing, the Swazi leaders became partners with the colonial state against the Swazi society in general. This meant that from then onward the Swazi leaders and the colonial state were poised to develop common interests regarding their object to remain in power. By 1911

Swazi Rulers in the Early Colonial Period" (unpublished paper, located in the Special Collection, University of Swaziland, Library, n.d.), pp. 1-27. For my comments on this paper, see chapter one above.

the Acting Resident Commissioner D. Honey wrote a letter to the Imperial Secretary in Pretoria to ask for a legal opinion on Labotsibeni's numerous requests to the Resident Commissioner for help to enforce her orders to the emaSwati. Honey also asked for clarification on how to handle cases of contempt of Labotsibeni's Court by the emaSwati, for the colonial state in Swaziland had no provision for dealing with Labotsibeni's concerns.¹³²

On strictly legal terms, the Legal Adviser R. Feetham, pointed out that section 17 of the Swaziland Administration Proclamation of 1907 had no provisions for the Resident Commissioner to help with the enforcement of Labotsibeni and her chiefs' judgments. After an involved legal interpretation of this Proclamation, Feetham pointed out a flaw and an ambiguity pertaining to the implementation of its provisions of the ground. He posed a rhetorical question, "if, however, the Chiefs have no power to authorise the taking of goods in execution, how are their judgments to be enforced?"¹³³ Indeed this demonstrates a major flaw and an ambiguity in the chiefs' jurisdiction in civil cases as was provided for in the Proclamation of 1907, for although the arrangement had granted Labotsibeni and her Council a right to exercise their power in civil cases, the Proclamation had simultaneously deprived them of the mechanisms with which to execute their power. To solve this ambiguity, Feetham suggested a roundabout solution, i.e., the Resident Commissioner and Assistant Commissioners could help to enforce

¹³²Letter, D. Honey, for Resident Commissioner, Mbabane, to the Imperial Secretary, High Commissioner's Office, Pretoria, October 7, 1911 (J486/11, SNA).

¹³³R. Feetham's legal opinion to the Imperial Secretary (R.C.S. 486/11).

Labotsibeni's decisions, but with an addition of a European-style court flavor in the procedures while executing her decisions.¹³⁴ Honey, Swaziland's Government Secretary, explained to the Assistant Commissioners Feetham's views for implementation as follows:

Where a party to proceedings before the Chief Regent [Labotsibeni] or other Chiefs wishes effect given to the judgment of such Chief through the medium of an Assistant Commissioner's Court, it is necessary for such successful party to institute proceedings in your court by way of summons as if the case were between Europeans or between a European and a Native, and it follows as a result that the usual procedure must be adopted when carrying judgments into execution; i.e.[,] writs must be issued in the ordinary manner and executed by the Messenger of your Court, except where an Order for specific performance is given, when the Messenger will carry into effect that Order.¹³⁵

This meant that from henceforth Labotsibeni and her chiefs' judgments to the emaSwati were to be clothed in European-style as far as their execution was concerned. This also means that, at least in theory, from then onward the days of the Swazi masses' tendency to ignore Labotsibeni and her chiefs' verdicts were now history. However, in practice the emaSwati had continued to defy Labotsibeni's orders up to the end of her political career in 1921. For example, by 1919 she still reported to the Resident Commissioner that the emaSwati continued to disregard her summons to them to appear before her Court. The widespread seriousness of this practice is evident in that the

¹³⁴*Ibid.*

¹³⁵D. Honey's Circular No. 8, to All Assistant Commissioners, February 8, 1912 (R.C.S. 486/11, SNA). For a note on execution of the opinions, see Honey's Circular No. 55, to all the Assistant Commissioners, December 5, 1911 (R.C.S. 486/11). See also letter, B. Nicholson, Government Secretary, to the Assistant Commissioner, Hlatikhulu, March 28, 1919 (R.C.S. 486/11).

Resident Commissioner deemed it necessary to call upon the Assistant Commissioners to assist Labotsibeni to rein in the recalcitrant emaSwati. On the instruction of the Resident Commissioner, the Government Secretary, Nicholson issued a circular to all Assistant Commissioners in which he informed them that they should tell all chiefs in their districts "to warn their natives that if any party to a civil case before the Chief Regent does not appear after having been duly summoned by her messenger, or in case of illness or other good cause for absence, fails to send a message to the Chief Regent explaining the reason for his failure to appear, the case may be given against him."¹³⁶ This directive illustrates the difficulties with which Labotsibeni was faced in her attempts to exercise power over the emaSwati, without possessing some key instruments of power: the means to enforce her decision.

Returning to Feetham's recommendations as discussed above, he suggested that when executing Labotsibeni's judgments, the Assistant Commissioners' courts "would not enquire into the merits of the case except on some such ground as that the Chief had no jurisdiction, or that the defendant was never properly summoned to appear [before the Chief's court], or that judgment was fraudulently obtained."¹³⁷ Apparently Feetham had made this recommendation in order to avoid a potential conflict of legal views between the Swazi-style and European-style courts procedures. However, whatever his reasons

¹³⁶Circular No. 22, from B. Nicholson, Government Secretary, Mbabane, to all Assistant Commissioners, & Resident Justice of the Peace, Bremersdorp, June 7, 1919 (R.C.S./398/19, SNA).

¹³⁷Feetham's legal opinion to the Imperial Secretary (R.C.S. 486/11). See also D. Honey's Circular No. 8, to All Assistant Commissioners, February 8, 1912 (R.C.S. 486/11).

were, this provision harmonized the work of the Labotsibeni's and Assistant Commissioners' court system with regard to the execution of the former's decisions. Henceforth these two institutions, Labotsibeni's Swazi authority and the Resident Commissioner's colonial authority became partners in maintaining 'law and order' on the Swazi society. This arrangement had in an ingenious manner extended the influence, authority and jurisdiction of the colonial state to what had been so far viewed as exclusively Swazi Authorities' jurisdiction. It did this without extending Swazi Authorities' jurisdiction to the colonial state's exclusive jurisdictions, e.g., in situations which involved a European and a Swazi; matters affecting Europeans in the country, among others. However, this point would might have been immaterial to Labotsibeni and her Council, for they seem to have acquiesced to the colonial state's take over the administration of the whole country. Instead, they were now focusing their energy to fighting for the retention of power over the Swazi society, because their hold on the society would ensure them of a constituency for political legitimacy when challenging the colonial state on other issues.

The chiefs, for their part, had enthusiastically welcomed the new arrangements regarding the colonial state's enforcement of their decisions. For example, by January 1912, the Assistant Commissioner of Hlatikhulu District, D.L. Horveel, wrote to the Government Secretary to report that many chiefs were applying to his office for help in implementation of their decisions. Apart from reporting about the chiefs' request for help, Horveel was concerned with the financial implications involved in enforcing the

chiefs' judgments.¹³⁸ The issue was whether to use the services of the Messenger of the Court, "under the tariff of Civil Fees in Magistrates Courts, or should Special Native Messengers be employed for this work," and if so how much to pay them?¹³⁹ He suggested the pattern which was in practice in Natal for administration for Africans. In Natal as Horveel put it, the African Messengers ("Skonzi's") were "unattached without pay," and their services were used in "Civil Native work."¹⁴⁰ He stated, "their Fees were simply a charge for mileage, say 1½d for each mile travelled to and fro. This, I think you will agree with me, will be the least expensive method to all parties concerned."¹⁴¹

Horveel's suggestions demonstrate a common phenomenon which was the hallmark of European colonialism in Africa, to administer the colonies cheaply through the exploitation of African labor. Swaziland was not an exception from other colonies, as Horveel shows us by drawing lessons from other colonial situations like Natal for the administration of the emaSwati.

Crafting a theoretical construction of power relations between Labotsibeni, her

¹³⁸Letter No. HS 5/2/1912 from D.L. Horveel, Assistant Commissioner, Hlatikhulu, to the Government Secretary, Mbabane, January 24, 1912 (R.C.S, 486/11).

¹³⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁴¹*Ibid.* For a discussion of the British policy of African administration in Natal which is referred to here by the Assistant Commissioner, see Benjamin Kline, Genesis of Apartheid: British African Policy in the Colony of Natal, 1845-2893 (New York: University Press of America, 1988), and David Welsh, The Roots of Segregation: Native Policy in Colonial Natal, 1845-1910 (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1st publ. 1971, 2nd publ. 1973). For a general discussion of 'Native' Policy in southern Africa, see Ifor L. Evans, Native Policy in Southern Africa: An Outline (London: Cambridge

Council on the one hand and the colonial state on the other, with regard to their joint efforts to enforce the former's judgment, was one thing, and the implementation of that plan was quite another. The events of 1920 and 1921 brought to the fore the difficulties involved in the execution of the plan and the complexities entailed in superimposing a rigid European-style justice system upon what was otherwise a fluid and always negotiated Swazi legal system. In 1920 Labotsibeni wrote to the Resident Commissioner to request him to provide her with an African Constable to accompany her messengers to attach the properties of chiefs who disobeyed the judgment she had passed on them in a civil case in 1919. The case was submitted to Labotsibeni by Ngomankulu Maseko against three chiefs: Nsukumbili Magagula, Mtonga Magagula and Nkonzo Magagula, all from Ubombo District, eastern part of Swaziland. Labotsibeni's verdict on this case was as follows, Nsukumbili was fined fifteen head of cattle, two goats, two sheep, five assegais, three bags of mealies, and two and half bags of corn; Mtonga fined fifty seven head of cattle, and Nkonzo thirty head of cattle.¹⁴² The Resident Commissioner then advised Labotsibeni to direct her request to the Assistant Commissioner of Ubombo District, because all the persons involved in this case lived in this district and the procedure was first to start with the Assistant Commissioner of a district in such cases.¹⁴³

University Press, 1934).

¹⁴²Letter, Labotsibeni, Zombodze, to the Resident Commissioner, Mbabane, November 10, 1920 (R.C.S. 690/20, SNA).

¹⁴³D. Honey, Resident Commissioner, to the Chief Regent, November 15, 1920 (R.C.S. 690/20)

In early 1921 Labotsibeni's messengers and an African Constable Hoye, a messenger for the office of the Assistant Commissioner of Ubombo District, went to execute her Court order at Nsukumbili's place. They found chief Nsukumbili with many armed men. Thereupon, the messengers returned without executing the order. At this point the Resident Commissioner issued a directive to the Acting Assistant Commissioner of Ubombo to summon Chief Nsukumbili to his office (Assistant Commissioner's) to explain what had happened at his place when Labotsibeni's and the Assistant Commissioner's Court messengers were there to execute the judgment. The Resident Commissioner also informed the Assistant Commissioner to send Nsukumbili to him in Mbabane "to be dealt with" should he give an unsatisfactory explanation or defied the judgment.¹⁴⁴ For his part, Chief Nsukumbili remained defiant to the Assistant Commissioner's orders. He did not come to see the Assistant Commissioner, claiming that he was sick. Thereupon, the Assistant Commissioner issued orders for him to be brought to Mbabane, "unless he [was] obviously too ill to go as his refusal to obey the judgment referred to [Labotsibeni's] is most flagrant."¹⁴⁵ The Assistant Commissioner concluded his letter by stating that he had even warned Nsukumbili in the past via his Ndvuna that the judgment had to be executed or he could lodge an appeal against Labotsibeni's judgment within a specified time period. However, Chief Nsukumbili had

¹⁴⁴Letter, A.G. Marwick, Acting Assistant Secretary, to the Acting Assistant Commissioner, Ubombo, March 12, 1921 (R.C.S. 690/20). See also a letter from A.G. Marwick, to Assistant Commissioner, Mbabane, March 3, 1921 (R.C.S. 690/20).

¹⁴⁵Letter, T.A. Steward, Acting Assistant Commissioner, Ubombo, to the Government Secretary, Mbabane, March 17, 1921.

disobeyed everything which was said to him.¹⁴⁶ In Nsukumbili's behavior, therefore, we have a clear demonstration of resistance against both Labotsibeni's judgment and the colonial state's attempts to enforce her decisions. This could be interpreted to mean that chiefs were not always willing to cooperate with the colonial state. But more importantly is that this might be an indication of a continuation of precolonial power relations between the Swazi royal house and the chiefs. Power relations between these two institutions had not been stress free. Hlatikhulu and Ubombo districts had a long history of influential chiefs who enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy from the Swazi political center, even during the precolonial times. For example, Chief Mbokweni of the Mamba clan was among the influential chiefs who were known to had tendencies to act independently of orders from the royal house at the end of the nineteenth-century and the beginning of the twentieth-century.¹⁴⁷

On March 17, 1921 Chief Mtonga appeared before the Resident Commissioner and told him that Labotsibeni had informed him (Mtonga) to pay ten head of cattle and to return to Ngomankulu Maseko, the complainant in this case, a cow which was paid for Mtonga's mother. That meant that Maseko was expected to pay eleven cattle instead of fifty seven head of cattle as had been stipulated Labotsibeni's original judgment, which

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷For some of Bokweni's independent actions in which he practised the "killing off" following his mother's death in 1902, see a copy of an urgent and confidential letter from B. Colenbrander, R.M. Ingwavuma, Zululand to the Chief Magistrate and Civil Commissioner, Eshowe, February 13, 1902 (J13/02, SNA), and Letter, S.Y. Lagden, Commissioner for Native Affairs, Transvaal, to Colonel Henderson, Pretoria, March 10, 1902 (J13/02);.

she had reported to the Resident Commissioner. The Resident Commissioner refused to accept Maseko's word, and instead wrote to Labotsibeni for clarification.¹⁴⁸ Labotsibeni confirmed to the Resident Commissioner that indeed she had adjusted Mtonga's fine from the original 57 head of cattle to ten head of cattle after Mtonga had requested the reduction of the penalty. When doing so she had informed Mtonga that he could pay ten head of cattle on condition that the plaintiff Maseko was agreeable to the reduced penalty.¹⁴⁹ Labotsibeni's altering of her initial judgment on Mtonga concerned the Resident Commissioner that she might have done the same with other defendants in this case. He then wrote to Labotsibeni to find out whether there had been any variation to the original penalties for Nsukumbili and Nkonzo as had been the case with Mtonga.¹⁵⁰ Labotsibeni's reduction of Mtonga's penalty from the fifty seven head of cattle to ten head of cattle on provision that the plaintiff Maseko accepted it reveals flexibility in Swazi legal system as compared to the British legal system.

The above discussion has shown that Labotsibeni was faced with a formidable and determined opponent in the shape of the administrative machinery of the colonial state. For example, Buxton, High Commissioner, wrote to B. Walter, Colonial Office, that:

¹⁴⁸Letter, Marwick, Acting Government Secretary, to the Chief Regent, March 17, 1921 (R.C.S. 690/20).

¹⁴⁹Letter, Labotsibeni to the Acting Government Secretary, March 21, 1921 (R.C.S. 690/20).

¹⁵⁰Letter, Marwick to the Chief Regent, April 22, 1921 (R.C.S. 690/20).

The Chief Regent is undoubtedly the dominating personality among the natives of Swaziland, but her influence like that of all the older school of chiefs is on the wane. This, to a large extent, is due to the establishment of a settled form of Government which has lessened the uncontrolled power that they formerly exercised, as well as to the daily contact of the natives with the Assistant Commissioners and other officials who administer the various districts.¹⁵¹

Buxton had indeed made an astute observation on Labotsibeni's waning influence on the emaSwati in general and in particular on some of her administrative machinery, the chiefs, by 1917. Old age was catching up with her, as she was born c. 1858 and she had lost her son Malunge who died in 1915. Malunge had been her most trusted confidant and adviser on the affairs of the country. He was succeeded by his brother Lomavazi as Prince Regent and Labotsibeni's adviser. However, although Lomavazi was Labotsibeni's son, he did not play as influential a role as Malunge did in the affairs of the country.

Labotsibeni Passes the Reins of Power to her Grandson Sobhuza II

As Labotsibeni was involved in numerous encounters with the colonial state, she was simultaneously responsible for preparing her grandson Sobhuza II for his political duties as the Paramount Chief of the emaSwati. Sobhuza was only an infant of four months old when his father Paramount Chief Bhunu died in October 1899. Thus Labotsibeni became involved in the upbringing of Sobhuza from October 1899 until he attained his majority when he assumed his official duties as the head of the emaSwati in

¹⁵¹Letter, Buxton, High Commissioner's Office, Pretoria, to B. Walter, Colonial Office, December 27, 1917 (RCS 364/17, SNA).

1921. According to Swazi political 'tradition' Sobhuza was expected to succeed to the Paramount Chieftaincy with his mother Lomawa Ndwandwe in her capacity as the Queen Mother. By so doing, Sobhuza and his mother Lomawa continued the Swazi political practice of having two heads of state, though by this time they were in fact heads of what was called the Swazi Nation Land, i.e., land reserved for the use of and occupation by the emaSwati as separate from the Crown lands and the land given to the European concessionaires by the colonial state since what the Swazi leaders had viewed as the infamous land partition Proclamation Act of 1907.

Labotsibeni officially handed the reins of power to Sobhuza II on December 22, 1921. She later transferred the 'rain medicine' to Sobhuza's mother, Lomawa Ndwandwe, who now became Queen Mother, though in the colonial context the British officials referred to her as Chieftainess. During the inauguration of Sobhuza II as Paramount Chief, Labotsibeni made key remarks on what she had done and what lay ahead for Sobhuza. In presenting him to the people who came for the inauguration ceremony, who included the Resident Commissioner, D. Honey, Labotsibeni said, "this is the day I have always longed for. It has now come at last like a dream which has come true."¹⁵² Then she continued, "King Mbandeni [her husband] died in October 1889 (thirty two years ago). As from that day my life has been one burdened with an awful responsibility and

¹⁵²Labotsibeni's Speech at the Inauguration of Sobhuza II as Paramount Chief, Zombodze, December 22, 1921 (R.C.S. 756/20, SNA). This speech was addressed to the Resident Commissioner.

anxiety. It has been a life full of the deepest emotions that a woman has ever had."¹⁵³

Here Labotsibeni reveals her self-consciousness as a woman faced with the challenging responsibility in her capacity as the head of the Swazi society.

She expressed her confidence in Sobhuza's leadership and the way she had prepared him for his political task. She stated, "I have brought him up as a Swazi prince should be brought up. His spirit is in entire accord with the traditions and the feelings and aspirations of his countrymen and what is more I have given him the opportunity to obtain the very best training which any native youth can obtain here in South Africa [Lovedale]."¹⁵⁴ Apart from the importance of this statement for the study of Sobhuza's political career, the statement also speaks directly to a colonial situation. Here Labotsibeni implies that the presence of British colonialism in Swaziland had not prevented her from preparing her grandson for what he had been destined to be in a free country: a prince and ultimately a king. It is remarkable that Labotsibeni had managed to shelter Sobhuza from the direct influence of a colonial state. Labotsibeni never lost hope that Sobhuza would emerge as a leader of the emaSwati. She expressed her satisfaction for a job well done in preparing Sobhuza for leadership, "in him I feel that I have done all that as his grand mother [grandmother] and Queen I could possibly do."¹⁵⁵

Evidently with a hindsight of what had happened after her husband's [King

¹⁵³*Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵*Ibid.*

Mbandzeni] death, when he was alleged to have sold the country to European concessionaires, an allegation she and the Swazi Council never accepted, she saw fit to clear her name of any allegation regarding the way she had handled the affairs of the country. She told her audience, "I have asked Your Honour [Resident Commissioner] to come here and bear me witness before him [Sobhuza] and the Council of the Nation, to the effect that I have never sold even a single right of the Nation. I have never given away of their land or people to others. I stand before them with clean hands. All my books are open for his [Sobhuza] inspection."¹⁵⁶ Therefore, apart from the point that Labotsibeni had invited the Resident Commissioner to the ceremony in order to honor the political protocol, she also had an agenda to set her record straight in his face, and by so doing, to clear her name of any possible future propaganda. In doing so, she also prepared the way for Sobhuza to deal with the officials of the colonial state from a stronger position, for he could refer to this statement to which the Resident Commissioner was a witness.

She formally introduced Sobhuza to Honey, the Resident Commissioner, as the "Paramount Chief of Swaziland and King of the Swazi Nation. In doing this I commend him to your friendly assistance and help. I cannot give him my experience."¹⁵⁷ By introducing Sobhuza as Paramount Chief and King, Labotsibeni revealed the ambiguities of power in colonial Swaziland.

She explained her new role after 1921 and her relations with Sobhuza as dictated

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

by the Swazi customs and traditions. She stated that as Sobhuza took over the leadership of the emaSwati, she would continue to exercise some influence over him and the Council by virtue of her seniority. She asserted, "my duties towards him and the nation will never cease until death."¹⁵⁸ Indeed, she continued to take a keen interest in the affairs of Swaziland until her death from brain hemorrhage on December 5, 1925.¹⁵⁹ The news of her death was widely reported both in government circles and in the media. An newspaper article remarked that, "it has been said that she possessed the brain of a statesman, and certainly she dealt faithfully by her people against the ablest of the incoming white men attracted to the country by the lavish concessions of Mbandini [sic]."¹⁶⁰ This remark was indeed flattering, particularly that even her husband, the late King Mbandzeni never received such an acknowledgment. In general, it was not common to find European observers who had admired African leaders, especially when the expansion of European colonialism was at its peak in Africa. Labotsibeni's political career ought to be assessed in its own right because her ability to handle Swazi politics was unsurpassed in Swazi history.

¹⁵⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹See a doctor's brief note attached to Honey's letter to the Paramount Chief, Sobhuza, Lobamba, December 7, 1925 (R.C.S. 690/25).

¹⁶⁰"The Ndhlovukazi," *Lake Chrissie Chronicle*, 12/2/1925 (R.C.S. 602/25, SNA).

Chapter Nine

CONCLUSION

This work has examined the history of the institutions of queen mother and queen regents in Swazi politics from the precolonial to the colonial period. The work has shown that queen mothers and queen regents were active participants in Swazi politics. The office of the queen mother had evolved from an original concern by Swazi kings to regulate the rules of succession in the monarchy. The office of the queen mother was also created in order for the queen mother, i.e., the mother of a king, to restrain the untoward behavior of her son the king. The establishment of the position of queen mother was followed quickly by that of the queen regent.

The office of queen regent had evolved directly from that of the queen mother. The era of the queen regent's tenureship provided queen regents with enormous political power because of the absence of a fully active king. Since queen regents had become effective leaders of the country during the period of the minority of kings, they emerged as influential political actors. From the humble beginnings of the institutions of queen mother and queen regents, the various occupants of these offices had shaped the power of their offices to become a force in the politics of Swazi monarchy. They expanded the functions of their offices from being ordinary benchmarks for the selection of new kings during succession eras, and mere office holders for the minor heirs, to becoming major political players in their own capacities. In this dissertation I have examined the manner in which the roles of queen mothers have changed over time from their initial beginnings

to the time when they became major participants in kingship. The establishment of the office of queen mother as a co-ruler with her son as a king, had introduced a notion of a dual monarchy in precolonial Swaziland. The unity of a dual monarchy, i.e., a state with two heads, the king and his mother, has outlived European colonialism in Swaziland.

Notwithstanding the participation of queen mothers and queen regents in Swazi politics, the Swazi society during the period of this dissertation, circa 1875 to 1921 was patriarchal like most societies of the time. I have examined the development of patriarchy in the Swazi society in order to understand what had appeared to me a paradox, i.e., a society which had allowed women to occupy one of the highest offices of the land, and yet had retained patriarchal formation in general. Unlike in most existing works which associate the development of patriarchy in African societies with the expansion of European capitalism, in the case of Swaziland I have argued that the emergence of patriarchy predates the coming of Europeans to Swaziland.

The evolution of European colonialism in Swaziland has been a gradual process like in other places in Africa. However, Swaziland had an uncommon feature from other colonies in Africa, in that its colonizers never used overt military force when they imposed their colonization. According to Britain's classification of its colonial possessions in southern Africa, Swaziland was grouped with Lesotho and Botswana under the label of the High Commissioner Territories or simply the British Protectorates. Yet, even when compared with her two sister 'protectorates' Swaziland stands out as a country where the British did not use their military force to make their predominance recognized. Lesotho and Botswana, on the other hand, had experienced the sting of the

British military. But of even more significance was the fact that the British had also used military force when they colonized the Boer Republics of the Transvaal in 1881 to 1884 and again the Transvaal and the Orange Free State from 1899 to 1902.

That Swaziland had managed to escape what was a common phenomenon in the spread of British colonialism in southern Africa, military might, can be attributed to two factors. First, the emaSwati staved off British intervention through their military 'collaboration' with the British and the Transvaal Boers against other African kingdoms, the BaPedi under King Sekhukhune in the Transvaal in 1876 to 1879, and with the British against the Zulu Kingdom in 1879, where the Swazi army was put on stand-by, while the British military was fighting with the amaZulu. Second, it was the ability of the Swazi leaders themselves who displayed an unparalleled skill in the history of Africa in their handling of the Europeans. On two occasions in 1898 and 1904 there was the possibility of the use of force by the Transvaal Boer Republic or the British on the emaSwati. That military force was never employed against the emaSwazi on those occasions, is better explained by studying the actions of the Swazi leaders, because it was their actions rather than those of either the Boers or the British which ultimately prevented the use of military power. In this study I have analyzed the Swazi strategies to avert the use of European military power from the 1880s to the first decade of the twentieth-century.

The period of the 1890s was characterized by the joint efforts of the governments of Britain and the Transvaal to impose colonialism on Swaziland. During this era Swaziland was dominated by women leaders, queen regent Tibati Nkambule and Queen Mother Labotsibeni. I have examined their resistance to the Anglo-Transvaal attempts to

impose Transvaal Boer colonial rule on Swaziland. It was during this period that the government of Britain and the Transvaal had degraded the status of the Swazi heir apparent Bhunu, who was supposed to be King Ngwane V upon his attaining of majority. However, in 1895 with the Transvaal's effective establishment of its administration after a long protracted struggle with the Swazi queens, Bhunu's kingship status was reduced to that of a 'paramount chief', at least on paper, in keeping with other colonized leaders in British colonial Africa. With the 1898 Protocol to the Anglo-Transvaal Convention of 1894, Bhunu was effectively stripped of his independence, and henceforth he and all the emaSwati became subject to colonial law. Thus, he became a merely 'paramount chief'.

In October 1899 Bhunu died after he had been in office for less than five years. Thus, the leadership of the emaSwati people was assumed by Labotsibeni as queen regent, holding the Swazi throne for her grandson Sobhuza II, who attained his majority in 1921 when he assumed his position as 'Paramount Chief' of the emaSwati in British colonial Swaziland. As the head of the Swazi authority (Swazi National Council) Labotsibeni opened the doors for Swazi participation on the British side in the South African War of 1899 to May 1902. She did so because she had calculated that such an action would earn the emaSwati the protection of their independence against Europeans. A similar action had served the country well when the Swazi had collaborated with the Boers and the British against the BaPedi and the amaZulu in 1876 and 1879. On those occasions Swaziland had enjoyed relative independence. However, as events unfolded after the South African War, Labotsibeni realized that she had to defend the Swazi independence against British colonialism. From 1903 onward the British intensified their

efforts in colonizing Swaziland.

It was during this period (from 1903) that the Swazi leaders began to complain of suffering under a British colonial state. Labotsibeni distinguished her political career as a statesman in this era when she confronted the British colonial state in many encounters. Her underlying objective was to preserve the Swazi 'paramount chieftaincy' and secure it for her grandson Sobhuza II. She also wanted to make sure that the colonial state did not succeed in its attempt to make inroads to the Swazi National Council's traditional constituency, the Swazi masses. To achieve this, Labotsibeni fought for the Swazi Council's right to preserve its jurisdiction in civil cases among the emaSwati. She wanted the 'paramount chieftaincy' to be the final authority in civil cases among the emaSwati. Once she realized that she could not have an absolute victory in these issues over the colonial state, and that the colonial state had deprived her of the tools for power, she collaborated with the colonial state against the emaSwati who disobeyed her orders. She requested the colonial state to enforce her judgments from her Courts.

In December 1921 Labotsibeni passed over the reins of the 'paramount chieftaincy' to her grandson Sobhuza II and his mother Lomawa Ndwandwe, who became the Queen Mother, though the British colonial officials referred to her as 'Chieftainess'. Labotsibeni had a varied legacy in the history of Swaziland. The preservation and survival of the Swazi monarchy is one of her legacies.

This dissertation throws light on other themes of interest to scholars of Swazi history. I have traced the development of Swaziland-South African relations over long time. The subject of the relations between Swaziland and South Africa has largely

remained unclear among scholars of Swazi history. I have provided a context from which to raise questions about the absence of a large scale national liberation movement to challenge colonial rule in Swaziland, a phenomenon which was common during the anti-colonial struggles in Africa. But more important, this work throws light on why is it that the Swazi royal house alone in southern Africa had succeeded to lead a post-colonial government in Swaziland. The work also laid a background to the study of chiefly power versus the Swazi royal house in colonial Swaziland.

This work suggests the need for a more nuanced study of queens and queen mothers in African history and politics. I have demonstrated in this study that queen mothers and queen regents had more than ceremonial and symbolic power in politics. Maybe it is time that we shift from the scholarly conception of the functions of queen mothers as custodians of ritual power, such as 'rain making' and as signposts for successions struggles by men to the political office. I have shown that queen mothers and queen regents were in fact active political players. For example, Labotsibeni assumed the leadership role of the Swazi society from 1899 to 1921, and she was in the forefront of the emaSwati's struggle against British colonialism.

The making of a colonial state has been a complex business for the colonizers as well as for the colonized. The allocation of power was one of the sticky aspects in the formation of a colonial state. Concerns about prestige and domination were not the exclusive prerogatives of the colonial officials as has suggested by scholars of colonial history elsewhere in Africa. The precolonial rulers were equally concerned with such aspects over their 'subjects'. Although the precolonial leaders were also colonized, they

wanted to maintain their precolonial privileged position over the colonized ordinary people.

However, the precolonial leaders' primary goal was to maintain the sovereignty of their country and people and resist the colonial imposition. The impetus for nationalism was continuous from the precolonial period, fostered and sustained by leaders such as Labotsibeni. Labotsibeni exemplified the statesmanship of African leaders who challenged by the advent of colonial rule. The well calculated strategies and actions of leaders like Labotsibeni demonstrate why the study of colonial policies tell us little about the experience of colonialism on the ground. Precolonial political elites such as the Swazi monarchy retained considerable power which forced accommodation by European colonial rulers in Africa.

In this dissertation I have shown that the Swazi leaders were self-conscious in their dealings with these colonial powers, and their (Swazi) overriding aims were the preservation of their independence and the protection of their monarchy from complete annihilation by the Anglo-Transvaal governments. By so doing, the Swazi leaders became active agents who influenced the shape of the colonial state in their country.

This work is not a biography of Labotsibeni. I only use the era of Labotsibeni as a vantage point from which to analyze the historical events regarding the colonization of Swaziland. My view is that, after all, the colonial powers were not overwhelmingly powerful as is often portrayed in literature which deals with European colonialism in Africa. I have demonstrated in this work that precolonial political institutions played a significant role in shaping the direction of affairs in the colonies. What is more, is that in

the case of Swaziland we find women leaders who did not lose power to the colonial state. This contrasts with the findings of other Africanists elsewhere, who have argued their colonialism had resulted in the loss of political power by women. I situate my discussion in the context of precolonial Swazi political institutions. Thus, I have given as a background an account of precolonial Swaziland, especially the place and role of Swazi queens in Swazi politics. I emphasize the history of queen mothers and queen regents in this work. I employ the framework of power relations to analyze the political history of the imposition of European colonialism in Swaziland.

APPENDIX

Original Grantee	Date of grant	Amount paid to the King in £	Present Holder or Holders	Amount paid by present Holders in £	Nature of Concession
McLachlan and Carter	7 May 1882 8 Aug 1886	3,000	Pigg's Peak Company Crystal Creek (La Caisse des Mines) Paris	— —	Mineral
James Forbes	20 June 1885	3,000	Forbes Reef Company	—	Mineral
Forbes, Swears, and others	20 June 1885	—	Forbes, Swears, and others	—	Mineral
Wylde, Kidson, and Simpkins	15 Sept 1886	—	Wyldesdale G. Exploration Company	15,000	Mineral
Purcocks and Bogie	15 Oct 1886	—	Various persons	350	Mineral
R.F. Rylands	25 Oct 1886	—	-----	—	Mineral
Wylde, Truter & Co.	20 Nov 1886	—	Wylde, Truter & Co	—	Mineral

C.B. Acton	20 Nov 1886	—	Acton's Swaziland Concession Co. Limited	5,000	Mineral
J.G. & G. Ferreira	20 Nov 1886	—	J.G. & G. Ferreira	—	Mineral
A.J. Shepstone	10 Dec 1886	—	Toweli Co., Limited	3,000	476 Mineral
J.G. Pullen	11 Dec 1886	250	Pullen's Syndicate	1,000	Mineral
Scott & McLachlan	17 Dec 1886	4,000	The Horo Exploration Co.	—	Mineral
T.B. Rathbone	17 Dec 1886	—	Havelock G.M. Co.	1,000	Mineral
G. Maber	17 Dec 1886	Nil	Umtimuleni Syndicate	5,000	Mineral
Handford and Peachy	9 Feb 1887	—	Handford and Peachy	—	Mineral
G. Kannemeyer	9 Feb 1887	50	Various persons	200	Mineral
Albre and Davis	11 Feb 1887	200	Swaziland (African) Gold Estates, Limited	5,000	Mineral
D. Purcocks	17 Feb 1887	150	D. Purcocks	—	Mineral

J. Gama	17 Feb 1887	30	J. Gama	—	Mineral
Martyn, Raucher, and others	17 Feb 1887	200	Various persons	500	Mineral
Meek, Vos, and Company	19 Feb 1887	120	Meek, Vos, and Company	Nil	Mineral
R. McNab	19 Feb 1887	Nil	Umbandine Syndicate	100	Mineral
D. Forbes, jr.	19 Feb 1887	130	D. Forbes, jr.	—	Mineral
J. Schruer	20 Feb 1887	46	New Gelderland Syndicate	1,750	Mineral
A. Meikle	21 Feb 1887	—	Mines Co., Limited	10,000	Mineral
G.E. Hales	21 Feb 1887	50	Hales Syndicate	500	Mineral
Henderson & Shepstone	10 Dec 1886	500	Syndicate	7,000	Mineral
Stephen Mini	21 Feb 1887	50	Stephen Mini	—	Mineral
A.H. Neumann	23 Feb 1887	90	A.H. Neumann	—	Mineral
A. Murray	24 Feb 1887	50	E. King	500	Mineral
J.H. Fells	24 Feb 1887	50	Various persons	100	Mineral

E.L. Stretch	28 March 1887	50	Stretch's Syndicate	Unknown	Mineral
E. King	29 March 1887	50	H. Eckstein	1,000	Mineral
W. Bird	30 March 1887	50	Bird's Swaziland Concessions, Limited	500	Mineral
T.B. Rathbone & W. Shepstone	31 March 1887	—	Swaziland Explosives & Dynamite Co., Limited	5,000	Dynamite
C.B. McCreedy	1 April 1887	50	Various persons	500	Mineral
E.C. du Pont	2 April 1887	50	du Pont & others	200	Mineral
du Pont, Erskine, & others	6 April 1887	50	du Pont, Erskine, and Co.	—	Mineral
James Forbes, jr.	24 April 1887	50	H. Eckstein	1,200	Mineral
Forbes and Henderson	28 April 1887	—	Forbes and Henderson G.M. Co.	20,000	Mineral
C. du Preez	30 April 1887	50	Andrew Ewing	100	Mineral
Davis & Morris	30 April 1887	100	Umbeloos Exploration		

			Co., Limited	1,500	Mineral
J. Colenbrander	13 May 1887	Nil	F. Adcock	Unknown	Mineral
Monk, Mason, & Rule	21 May 1887	50	Various persons	1,000	Mineral
C. Westbeach	21 May 1887	50	Various persons	200	Mineral
J. Thorburn	25 May 1887	50	H. Heller	775	Mineral
H.H. Smith	8 June 1887	50	Various persons	100	Mineral
J. Orton	8 June 1887	30	Various persons	Unknown	Mineral
Laas & Michaelson	30 June 1887	—	Laas & Michaelson	—	Mineral\
Smit & others	22 July 1887	25	South African Republic. Hereafter referred to as SAR	12,000	Railway
C.B. Kestell	– July 1887	—	Usutu Concession Co., Limited	190	Timber
Maber & Bennett	11 Feb 1888	100	Various persons	500	Liquor manufacture

J.H. Wylde	14 March 1888	20	Various persons	Nil	Firearms
Forbes' Reef Co.	19 April 1888	25	Forbes' Reef Co.	—	Canteen right
E.R. Renny Tailyour	7 May 1888	Nil	Various persons	1,000	Cement manufactur e
R. McNab & A. Meikle	5 July 1888	10	R. McNab & A. Meikle	—	Woollen manufactur e
Rathbone & Adamson	28 July 1888	—	Rathbone & Adamson	—	Trading
F.W. Forbes	15 Aug 1888	—	SAR	7,000	Electricity
John Thorburn	20 Aug 1888	—	SAR	2,000	Surveying
John Johnson	24 Aug	—	Various persons	Nil	Importation tobacco
John Thorburn	29 Aug 1888	—	Umbandeni Syndicate	Shares	Banking
A. Ewing	8 Sept 1888	—	Harington & Cohen	2,500	Milling

W.H. Davis	8 Sept 1888	—	Various persons	132	Iron manufactor y
Henderson & Darke	10 Sept 1888	—	Henderson & Darke	—	Trading
Maber & Freeman	17 Oct 1888	—	Various persons	Nil	Trading
J.R. Harington	29 Oct 1888	—	SAR	12,000	Postal
H.L. Dacomb	14 Nov 1888	—	SAR	4,000	Inland navigation
H.L. Dacomb	14 Nov 1888	—	H.L. Dacomb	—	Ponts & bridges
Max Stone	30 Nov 1888	—	J. Weich	500	Trading
J.E. Player	4 Dec 1888	—	Umbandeni Syndicate	Shares	Pounds
John Thorburn	22 Dec 1888	—	Umbandeni Syndicate	Shares	Unallotted minerals, & c
Catherine Parr	26 Dec 1888	—	SAR	2,000	Refreshmen t bars
Jonah Duncan	8 Jan 1889	—	A. Amoretti	50	Mechanical engineering
George			Umbandeni		

Maber	20 Jan 1889	—	Syndicate	Shares	Printing
E. Lissack	2 Feb 1889	20	Various persons	1,000	Auctioneer- ing
E. Lassick	2 Feb 1889	10	Various persons	Nil	Photograph y
Prosser & Gordon	18 Feb 1889	—	Attached under wit of execution	—	Silver extraction
M. Wells	18 Feb 1889	—	M. Wells	—	Chlorinatio n
J.R. Harington	19 Feb 1889	—	SAR	50,000	Licences
E. Eckersley	21 Feb 1889	10	Various persons	300	Sulphur springs
Stewart & Middleton	22 Feb 1889	—	Stewart & Middleton	—	Grand stands, & c.
C. Gordon	28 Feb 1889	Nil	Attached under wit of execution	—	Electro chemical gold & silver extraction
R. McNab	6 March 1889	10	Various persons	Nil	Tanneries
M. Wells	12 March		Various		

	1889	10	persons	150	Insurance
S.H. Simpkins	3 April 1889	Nil	Various persons	Nil	Canteen grant
J.R. Harington	20 April 1889	10	J.R. Harington	—	Diamond drills
N.H. Cohen	20 April 1889	—	Various persons	Shares	Importation tobacco
N.H. Cohen	22 April 1889	—	SAR	3,000	Customs
R.M. Campbell	26 April 1889	20	R.M. Campbell	—	Steam
M.F. Thorburn	1 May 1889	Nil	Umbandeni Syndicate	Shares	Gas
M.F. Thorburn	1 May 1889	Nil	Umbandeni Syndicate	Shares	Advertising , & c.
H.G. Darke	13 May 1889	—	H.G. Darke	—	Sanitation
H.G. Darke	13 May 1889	—	H.G. Darke	—	Sheep dipping
C. Gordon	18 May 1889	—	C. Gordon	—	Mineral oils
D. Forbes	18 May 1889	—	D. Forbes	—	Timber
D. Forbes	18 May 1889	—	D. Forbes	—	Timber

C.H. Verrall	28 May 1889	—	C.H. Verrall	—	Pawnbroking
J.C. Henwood	3 June 1889	Nil	J.C. Henwood	—	Trading
G.T. Ferreira	18 June 1889	—	P.M. Johnson	75	Butcheries & bakeries
R. McNab	21 June 1889	Nil	Various persons	Nil	Timber
Jas Fraser	21 June 1888. (This ought to be 1889, instead of 1888. I suspect a typing error here.)	Nil	Various persons	100	Trading
David Forbes	26 June 1889	—	David Forbes	—	Timber
N.H. Cohen	6 July 1889	—	Swazieland Monopoly Syndicate	150	Importation machinery
J. Thorburn & H. Town	- July 1889	—	Umbandeni Syndicate	Shares	Treatment of tailings
N.H. Cohen	6 July 1889	—	Swazieland Monopoly Syndicate	150	Importation of cement

J.R. Harington	6 July 1889	—	SAR	—	King's power of attorney
J.A. Major	6 July 1889	—	J.A. Major	—	Trading
J.R. Harington	18 July 1889	—	Swazieland Monopoly Syndicate	150	Central reduction mills
T. Rathbone & G. Darke	18 July 1889	10	T. Rathbone & G. Darke	—	Wool washing
E.N. Pullen	24 July 1889	—	E.N. Pullen	—	Trading
F. Watkins & J. Thorburn	26 July 1889	—	Umbandeni Syndicate	Shares	Unallotted lands
Ernest King	27 July 1889	—	Ernest King	—	Agency
A. Ewing	2 Oct 1889	—	A. Ewing	—	Timber
G. Maber	15 Feb 1890	—	Various persons	100	Timber

A list of amounts paid by original grantees and present concession holders from 1882 to 1890 as compiled by Theophilus Shepstone, Jr., for the British High Commissioner.

Source: this list is attached to a letter, Theophilus Shepstone, Resident Advisor and Agent, Swazi Nation, to Colonel Martin, the British Commissioner, Swaziland (No. 87/93), July 20, 1893 (CO879/38).



The key players in the Swazi power politics: From left to right is the Queen Mother Lomawa Ndwandwe; her son the Crown Prince Sobhuza II; his grandmother the then reigning Queen Regent Labotsibeni, and her confidante son Prince Malunge ka-Mbandzeni.

Source: Swaziland National Archives.



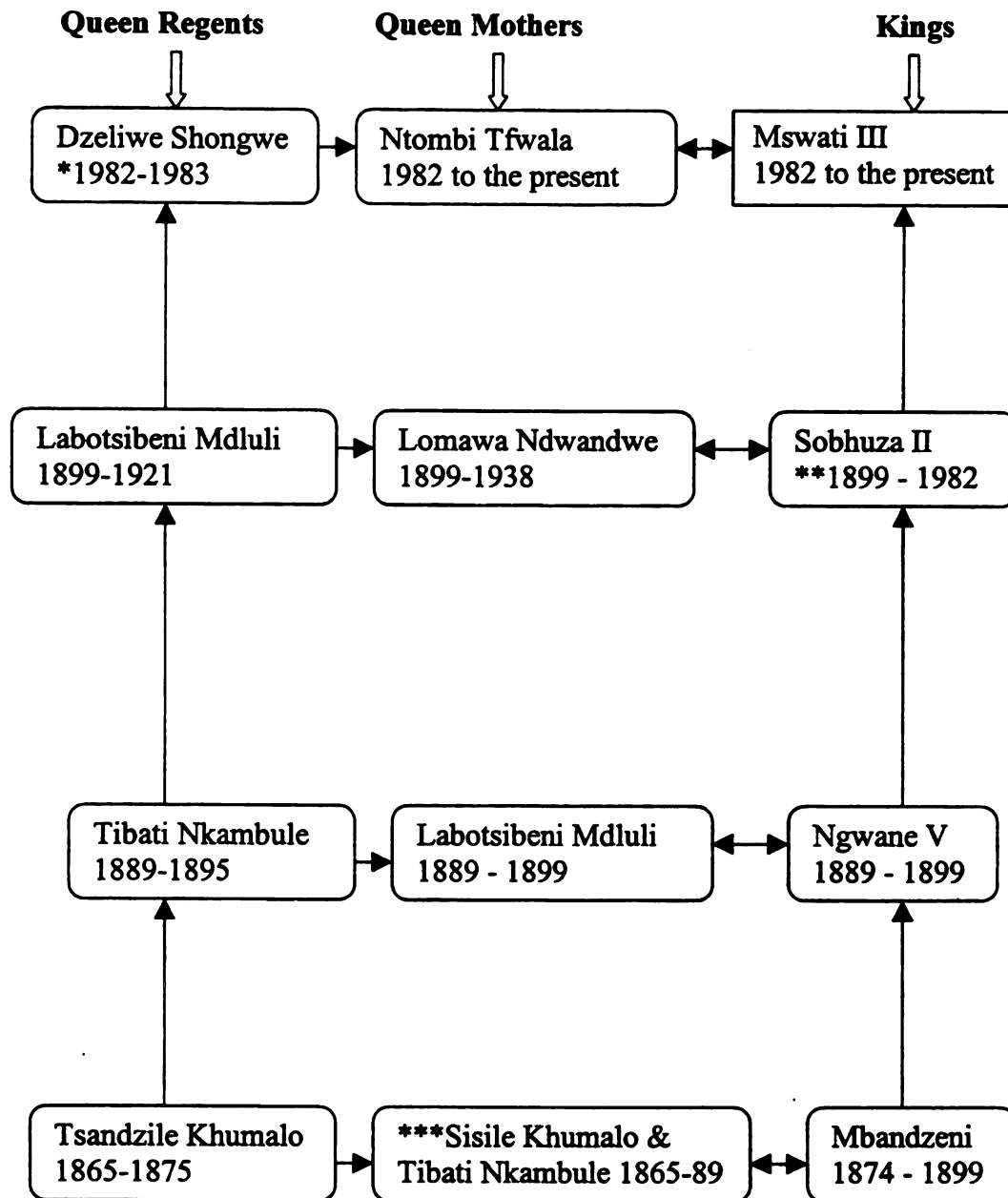
This is one of Queen Regent Labotsibeni's numerous meetings with British Colonial officials in Swaziland. From left to right: Queen Mother Lomawa; her son Crown Prince Sobhuza II, his grandmother Queen Regent Labotsibeni; Swaziland's Resident Commissioner S.M.G. Honey; High Commissioner Lord Sidney Charles Buxton; Mrs. Honey, and Lady Buxton.

Source: Swaziland National Archives.



Queen Regent Labotsibeni in her advanced aged. This photo was taken in 1917, and she died in 1925.¹

¹I am thankful to Rotter Sicheme Mamba who kindly donated this valuable photo.

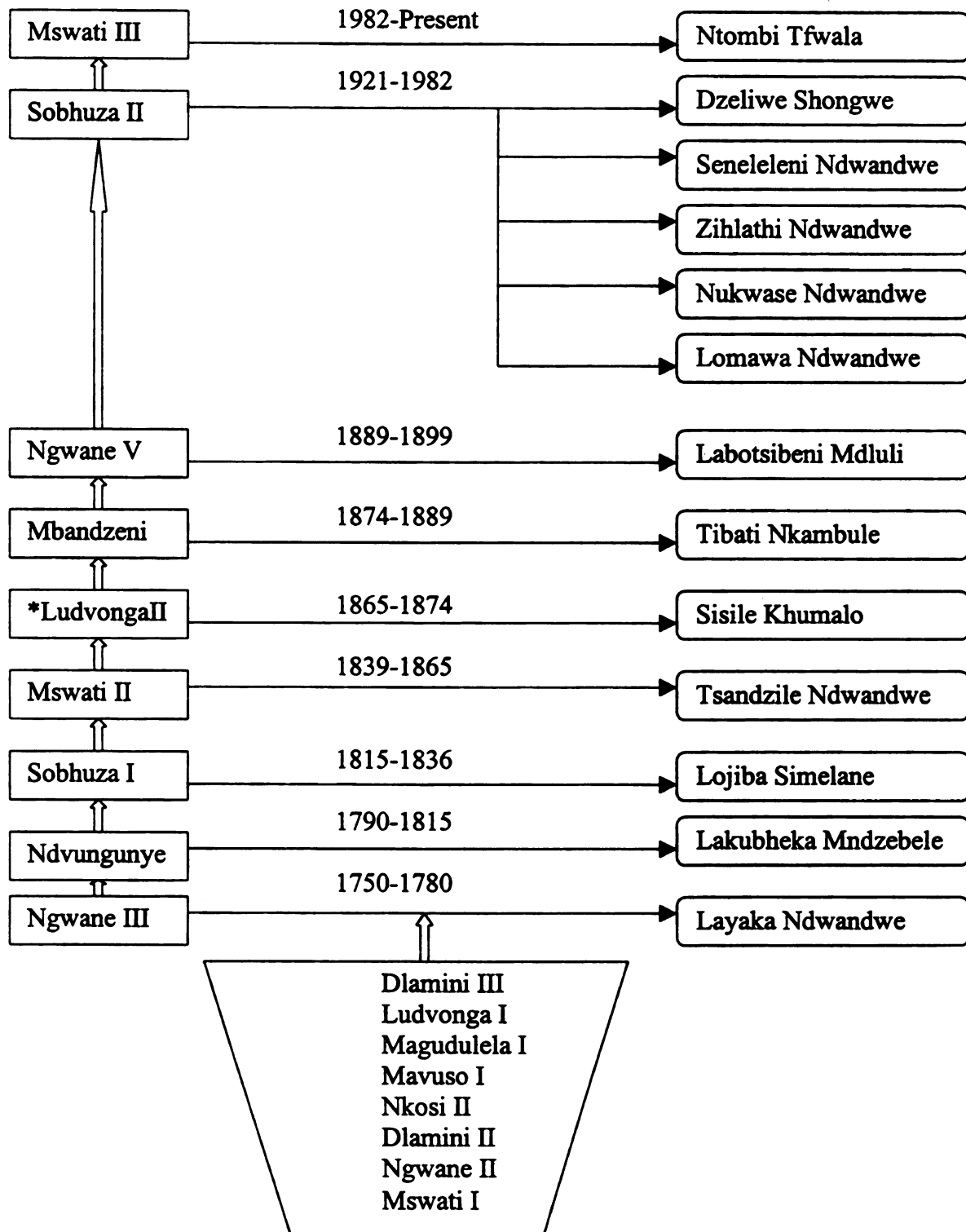


Swazi Queen Regents, Queen Mothers and Kings, 1865 to the present

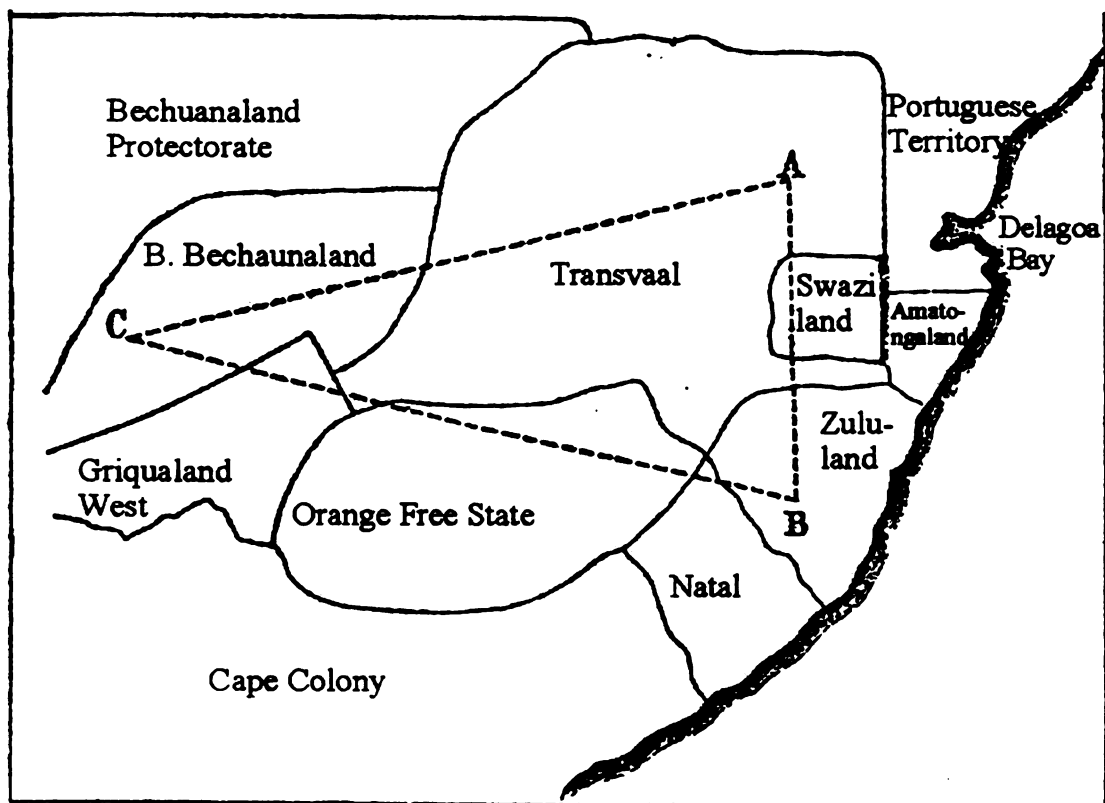
*The years represent the term of office.

**Sobhuza was appointed as an heir to the Swazi throne when he was four months old in 1899 and he assumed the political power in 1921 when attained his majority.

***Sisile Khumalo served as Queen Mother, 1865-74, in her capacity as the mother of Ludvonga, an heir apparent, who died in 1874 before assuming his position as a king. Khumalo became the Queen Mother of the motherless King Mbandzeni, 1874 - 81. Tibati Nkambule succeeded Khumalo as Queen Mother, 1881 - 89.



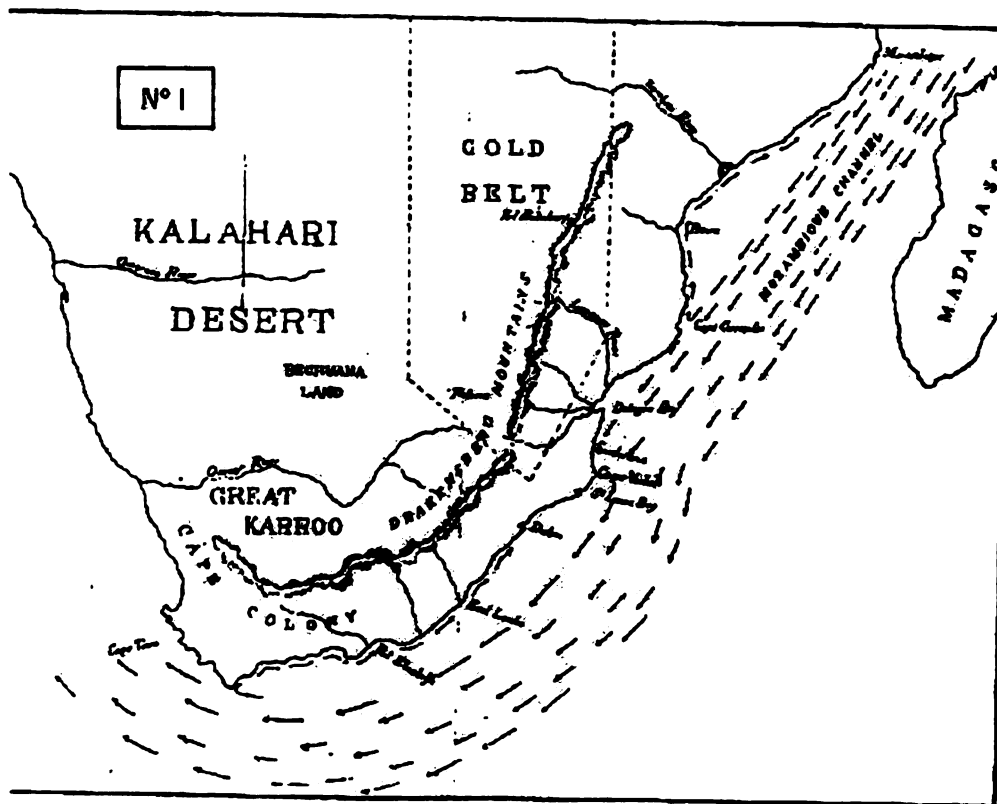
The Swazi Royal family with Kings on the left and the Queen Mothers on the right from 1750 to the present. *Prince Ludvonga, an heir apparent, died before assuming his position as a king.



“The triangle ABC represents the quartz formation, and the richest gold [was] found along the line AB,” early 1880s.

Source: Hercules Robinson’s Memorandum on Swaziland, Cape Town, attached to his letter to Edward Stanhope, British M.P., October 12, 1866, in *African*, No. 330. Printed for the use of the Colonial Office, CO 87/25.

Figure: 1



The dotted area on the map shows the gold spots. Swaziland falls within this area.

Source: William Jesser Coope, Swaziland as an Imperial Factor (London; James Baker & Co, ca., 1892, frontispiece.

Figure 2



Figure 3. The present states in southern Africa.

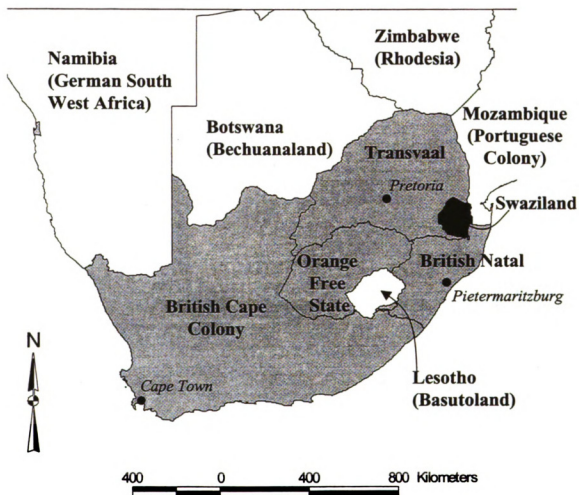


Figure 4. Southern Africa at the turn of the 19th century.

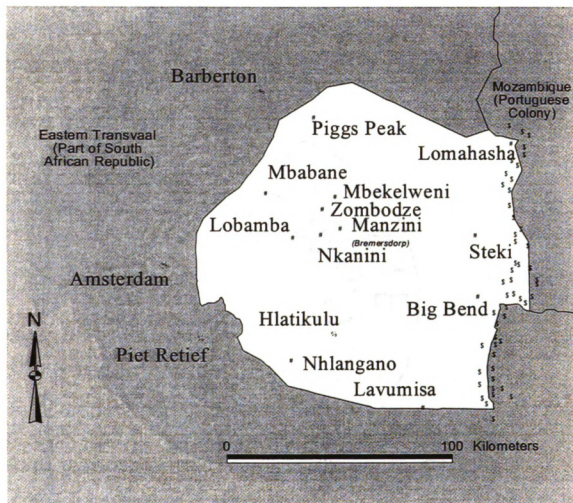


Figure 5. Key cities and centers of power in colonial Swaziland.

● Key centers of power

■ Other key cities

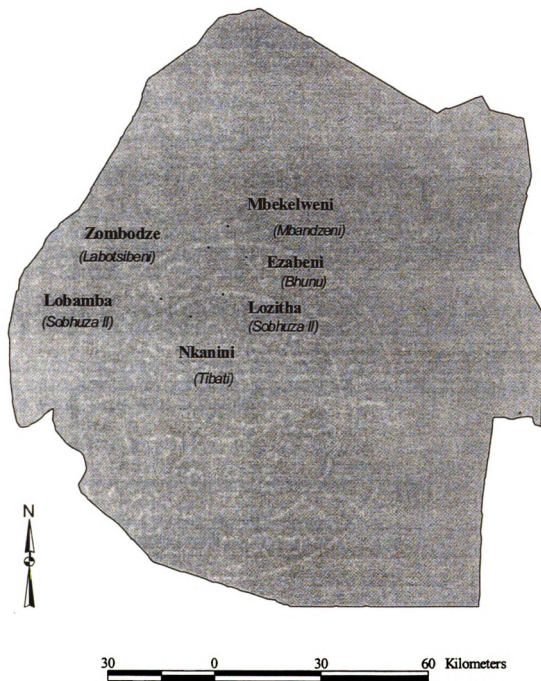


Figure 6. Swazi royal capitals and their reigning leaders (1875-1921).
City locations are approximate.

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