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Africana Marburgensia. — Marburg, Ger.

— 6, NO.1, PP.17-36, 1973

JOHNSTON, THOMAS F. "ASPECTS OF TSONGA HISTORY...."

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LCCN: 73286110 ISSN: 0002-0311

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG:

Ortsnamen können Hinweise auf Lebensart und Ideologie, auf Zeiten der Krise und Veränderung geben. Das zeigt sich auch am Beispiel von Bagamoyo. Unter den zahlreichen Etymologien erweist sich als die häufigste: bwagamoyo = be quiet, my heart; rest the mind, throw off melancholy, be cheered. Da in den meisten Sprachen des Landesinneren moyo "Herz" bedeutet, braucht diese Bezeichnung nicht notwendigerweise aus dem Swahili zu stammen. Es ist nur wahrscheinlich, daß der Name von Swahili sprechenden Trägern zum Ende des 18. oder Beginn des 19. Jh. geprägt wurde. Außer dem besagten Küstenort Bagamoyo gibt es in Tanzania noch 11 weitere Ortschaften des gleichen Namens.

SOMMAIRE:

Les dénominations de lieux peuvent symboliser le mode de vie, l'idéologie, les périodes de crise ou les périodes que marquent l'amorce d'un changement. Ce phénomène est illustré par l'exemple que fournit le cas de Bagamoyo. Parmi les nombreuses étymologies, on constate que la plus fréquente est: bwagamoyo = be quiet, my heart; throw off melancholy; be cheered. Du fait que, dans la plupart des langues de l'intérieur, moyo signifie "coeur", il ne ressort pas avec évidence que cette dénomination soit d'origine swahili. Vraisemblablement, le nom de Bagamoyo fut forgé par des porteurs parlant swahili à la fin du XVIII^e ou au début du XIX^e siècle. En plus du lieu déjà connu et que nous avons mentionné, il y a encore onze qui, en Tansanie, portent le nom de Bagamoyo.

ASPECTS OF TSONGA HISTORY

THROUGH SONG

Thomas F. Johnston

Very little is known of the history of the Shangani - Tsonga, a Bantu-speaking people numbering about 1 200 000 in Mozambique and 500 000 in the Northern Transvaal. However, they do possess a considerable body of oral literature, including many songs making historical references.

The words of the following song refer to the last great warlord of the Tsonga, Nghunghunyane, defeated by the Portuguese toward the end of the 19th century. Now confined to the Bantustan locations and dominated by the White presence, the Tsonga keep the memory of Nghunghunyane as an independent leader.

Nghunghunyane

Call: Nghunghunyane mihlovo ya vantu
Response: Ho mbavaza a yi mihlovo-o ya vantu-u !
Call: Nghunghunyane mihlovo ya vantu
Response: Ho mbavaza a yi mihlovo-o ya vantu-u !
Call: Ndzi ya mu landzela
Response: Ho mbavaza a yi mihlovo-o ya vantu-u !

Call: A wa ngi ciya nghe n'wana khe
Response: Ho mbavaza a yi mihlovo-l ya vantu-u!
Call: A ba n'wi voni
Response: Ho mbavaza a yi mihlovo-o ya vantu !

Nghunghunyane

Call: Nghunghunyane, personification of
our people
Response: We name him "The Ideal One"!
Call: Nghunghunyane, personification of
our people
Response: We name him "The Ideal One"!
Call: We are his followers
Response: We name him "The Ideal One"!
Call: His son neglected us
Response: We name him "The Ideal One"!
Call: We never catch sight of him
Response: We name him "The Ideal One"!

After the downfall of Nghunghunyane (son of Muzila, son of Ntshangane, alias, Manukosi), his son Thuli-lamahashe sought sanctuary in the Transvaal. He has been called Thulamashashi for short, but this appellation misses the meaning of his name - "Dust of Horses".

Another son of Nghunghunyane, called Gija, settled in the Sibasa area, but he was born of a

different mother, thus being only half-brother to Thuli-lamahashe.

Nghunghunyane

Call: Nghunghunyane

Response: Nghunghunyane mafela khwatini
ka nyamazani
Va ta sala va giya

Call: Nghunghunyane

Response: Nghunghunyane mafela khwatini
ka nyamazani
Va ta sala va giya

Nghunghunyane

Call: Nghunghunyane

Response: Nghunghunyane was killed in the bush
past the Game Reserve
His enemies remain dancing

Call: Nghunghunyane

Response: Nghunghunyane was killed in the bush
past the Game Reserve
His enemies remain dancing

The line "Nghunghunyane was killed in the bush past the Game Reserve" refers, not to the death of Nghunghunyane, but to his military demise, which occurred south-east of the Game Reserve, between Macia and Xinavane, near Lake Chuali. The Chopi

of those parts still sing the following song:

See Nghunghunyane flees, here
is Mavulendlhovu
The elephant eats trees, the
elephant eats trees
Cry Hail! Hail!

An informant from Bileni, named Pikinini, once told Henri Junod that "Nghunghunyane is dead, the Portuguese have eaten him". Both the term "killed" and the term "eats" refer to Nghunghunyane's military demise. The line "His enemies remain dancing" refers to the continued presence of the Portuguese in Mozambique.

Nghunghunyane

Call: Nghunghunyane, Nghunghunyane
Response: Wayidla mahala, wayidla mahala
Call: Nghunghunyane
Response: Wayidla mahala
Call: Nghunghunyane
Response: Wayidla mahala, wayidla mahala
Call: Sengi le
Response: Wayidla mahala
Call: Sengi le
Response: Wayidla mahala
Call: Nghunghunyane
Response: Wayidla mahala

Nghunghunyane

- Call: Nghunghunyane, Nghunghunyane
Response: You reap without sowing, you reap
without sowing
Call: Nghunghunyane
Response: You reap without sowing
Call: Nghunghunyane, Nghunghunyane
Response: You reap without sowing, you reap
without sowing
Call: Nghunghunyane
Response: You reap without sowing
Call: Now I am sleeping
Response: You reap without sowing
Call: Now I am sleeping
Response: You reap without sowing

The line "Now I am sleeping" refers to the subjugation and unresisting submission of the Tsonga to Nghunghunyane's increasing demands upon their resources. The line "You reap without sowing" refers to the despotic rule of those years, on which Henri Junod comments thus:

...it would be a great error to think that a Thonga chief is, or can be, an autocratic despot. This may have been the case with Chaka, Lobengula, or Gungunyana, when the tribe became an amalgamation of clans held together by military power; in order to main-

tain their usurped authority, these chiefs had to be cruel despots.

A Yi Hlomi

Call: Nyimpi ka hlomi-i-ya!
Si landze masocha-a-a ! Kahlomi-i
Response: Nyimpi ka hlomi-ya!
Call: Sengilele!
Response: Si landze masocha-a-a!
Call: A yi hlomi-i!
Response: Nyimpi ka hlomi-ya!

To Arms !

Call: Warriors, to arms!
The soldiers come! To arms!
Response: Warriors, to arms!
Call: Now I am asleep!
Response: The soldiers come!
Call: To arms!
Response: Warriors, to arms!

This song, A Yi Hlomi, closely resembles a formula noted by Henri Junod in Nondwane during the disturbances of the last century -- A hi hlomen! (To arms!)

A Yi Hlomi!

Call: Mayivavo si landze masocha nwa
weno-o-o

A yi hlomi-i-i!
Response: Nyimpi ka hlomi ha-a!
Sengilele si landze masocha nwe wena!
Call: Mayivavo!
Response: Nyimpi ka hlomi ha-a!
Mayivavo si landze masocha nwa wena!

To arms!

Call: Father, the soldiers come
To arms!
Response: Warriors, to arms!
The soldiers come upon those who
sleep
Call: Father!
Response: Warriors, to arms!
Father, the soldiers come!

This is a second version of the A Yi Hlomi song,
and it is addressed to "Father", which probably
refers to the chief or army general.

A Yi Hlomi!

Call: Nyimpi ka yi hlomi-i-i!
Response: Si landze masocha, manani!
Call: Nyimpi ka ya hlomi-i-i!
Response: Nyimpi ka yi hlomi-iya!
Call: He mama va jalala vonke-e
Response: Si landze masocha, manani!
Call: He mama va jala-ala

Response: Si landze yi hlomi-iya!
Call: He mama va jala-ala!
Response: Si landze yi hlomi-iya!
Call: M Mina ndzi thwaza eka Ndlhamini
Response: Si landze yi hlomi-iya!

To Arms!

Call: Warriors, to arms!
Response: We have come for the soldiers,
o mother!
Call: Warriors, to arms!
Response: Warriors, to arms!
Call: Warriors, to arms!
Response: Warriors, to arms!
Call: We have come for the soldiers,
o mother!
Response: They follow; to arms!
Call: I heard the news, mother
Response: They follow; to arms!

This is a third version of the A Yi Hlomi song, and it contains the common Tsonga exclamation "Mother!". The approach of Zulu warriors was an alarming event in those days; either the populace would be annihilated or the women abducted and the men forced into Zulu regiments where they were used as the vanguard, preceding the Zulu into battle.

Hayilali Zulu

Call: Ma-landzela!
Response: Hayilali Zulu
Call: Ma-landzela!
Response: Hayilali Zulu
Call: Famba va swi
Response: Siya Ma-landzela

The Zulus Never Sleep

Call: Followers!
Response: The Zulus never sleep
Call: Followers!
Response: The Zulus never sleep
Call: They've departed
Response: Leaving her alone

"The Zulus never sleep" is an ancient Tsonga saying, perhaps related to the following proverb:

Nghala yi etlele ni meno ya yona

The lion sleeps with its teeth

Hayilali

Call: Hayilali!
Zulu se ngi phume ka Magoha
Response: Hoo-hee-ha!
Zulu se ngi phume ka Magoha
Call: Hayilali!
Zulu se ngi phume ka Magoha

He Never Sleeps!

Call: He never sleeps!
The Zulu sleeps not; I arrive
from Magoha

Response: He never sleeps!
The Zulu sleeps not; I arrive
from Magoha

Call: He never sleeps!
The Zulu sleeps not; I arrive
from Magoha

Response: He never sleeps!
The Zulu sleeps not; I arrive
from Magoha

This is a second version of the song describing the Zulus' wakefulness, and its title word phume derives from phuma, "to begin to get dark after sunset".

Ndaba Ze Mkhondho

Call: He wena ya khuluma 'nkosi
Wena u ya khuluma 'nkosi

Response: Wena u ya khuluma 'nkosi

Call: Wena u ya khuluma 'nkosi

Response: He wena u ya khuluma ndaba
Ze mkhondlo

Call: U ya khuluma. Ha!
U ya khuluma. Ha!

Response: Ha-a! Ha-a-a-a!

The Message of the Arms

- Call: Hey you there, the chief is speaking
 You there, the chief is speaking
 Response: You there, the chief is speaking
 Call: You there, the chief is speaking
 Response: He is saying something
 About spears or arms!
 Call: He is conferring, ha!
 He is conferring, ha!
 Response: Ha-a! Ha-a-a-a!

This song is accompanied by notes from a bone-whistle, and it describes a chief's conference.

Khulumama, in the first line, is a Zulu word meaning "to speak", and it reminds us that the use of Zulu words was once a prestige symbol among the Tsonga.

N'wa-Rimondzwana Rin'we
 ♩ = 160
 Cycle: 40

(The Single-Horned One)
 Transpos.: maj 2nd up

The musical score is written on two staves. The first staff begins with a 'call' bracket and contains the lyrics: 'De-le-le de-le-le xo sa-la ma-si-n'vi-ni we-e de-le-le de'. A 'response' bracket covers the final 'de-le-le de'. A handwritten note 'adash vwe' is written below the 'xo sa-la' lyrics. The second staff begins with a 'call' bracket and contains the lyrics: 'le-le xo mhe ri-mho-ndzwa-na ri-i-n'we-e'. The score includes a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Wa-Rimhondzwana Rin'we

Unison chorus: Delele delele!

Solo: Xo sala masin'wini!

Un. chor.: Delele delele xo mhe!

Solo: Wa rimhondzwana rin'we!

Un. chor.: Delele delele!

Solo: Xo sala masin'wini!

Unis. chor.: Delele delele xo mhe!

Solo: A mi xi vonanga lexi nga dlaya
manana?

Un. chor.: Delele delele!

Solo: Xo sala masin'wini!

Un. chor.: Delele delele xo mhe!

Solo: Xa rimhondzwana rin'we

Un. chor.: Delele delele!

Solo: Xo sala masin'wini!

Un. chor.: Delele delele xo mhe!

Solo: A hi nchumu xi nga dlaya kokwana

Un. chor.: Delele delele!

Solo: Xo sala masin'wini!

Un. chor.: Delele delele xo mhe!

Solo: Xi nga dlaya manana

Un. chor.: Delele delele!

Solo: Xo sala masin'wini!

Un. chor.: Delele delele xo mhe!

The Single-Horned One

Un. chor.: Delele-delele!

Solo: The one who remained in the fields!

Un. chor.: Delele-delele, it cried!

Solo: It is the single-horned one!

Un. chor.: Delele-delele!
Solo: The one who remained in the fields!
Un. chor.: Delele-delele, it cried!
Solo: It killed my mother, did you not see?
Un. chor.: Delele-delele!
Solo: It remained in the fields!
Un. chor.: Delele-delele, it cried!
Solo: The Single-Horned One!
Un. chor.: Delele-delele!
Solo: It remained in the fields!
Un. chor.: Delele-delele, it cried!
Solo: It is nothing, which killed my
grandmother!
Un. chor.: Delele-delele!
Solo: It remained in the fields!
Un. chor.: Delele-delele, it cries!
Solo: The one which killed my mother!
Un. chor.: Delele-delele!
Solo: The one which remained in the fields!
Un. chor.: Delele-delele, it cried!

The singer exclaims that "it was 'nothing', that which killed my grandmother", and this suggests that the killer is no mere animal, but something strange and powerful, either a bewitched man or god. Prior to 1897, Henri Junod collected a tale in which was featured a unicorn, but the killer in our song is probably not a unicorn. It is probably

a marauding warrior of the Mamphondo regiment of the Nkuna general Mankhelu. These warriors tied a single rhinoceros-horn on their foreheads and imitated that beast's cry.

I. Schapera gives a Tswana praise-poem containing a similar allusion:

The chief's Poker, Rhinoceros,
... now that you've seen the
slasher fighting, the slasher
with the bloodstained horn ?

A Tinyandhayeya Vavanuna, Tindlopfu!

Call: He tindlopfu Mudlayi-Ndlopfu!

Response: He tindlopfu ti le ku chauke-e
Hi va kuma valobela na mihloti
Va rila mavele

Call: Tinyandhayeya vavanuna Mudlayi-
Ndlopfu

Response: He tindlopfu, ti le ku chauke-e
Hi va kuma valobela na mihloti
Va rila mavela

Come and Help, Men - Elephants !

Call: Come and help, men - elephants!

Response: The elephants are at Chauke's place
We found people mourning
For their corn

Call: Come and help, Elephant-Killer!
Response: Hey! Elephants are at Chauke's
We found people mourning
For their corn

The destruction wrought on cultivated fields by elephants can be considerable, and the Tsonga employ the following saying:

I ndlopfu, yi dlele mavele ensinwini
The elephant has killed mealies in the field

A song collected by Henri Junod describes the elephant thus:

Nwa-t jabat jabane makandjya ka ku oma
Ku sa ku baleka nhlngasi
Nkilopfu

The beast which marches slowly on the dry
ground
And a marsh is formed by its heavy footsteps
It is the elephant

Fifty miles due east of where this song was performed, is a place called Mahlamba-Ndlopfu-Pan, ndlopfu meaning elephant, and the complete place-name meaning Watering-Place-of-the-Elephants.

However, as with the previous song, evidence indicates that it is not real elephants with which our song is concerned, but marauding warriors. Concerning Chauke, N.J. van Warmelo identifies a Pietersburg chief as Tsauke, probably a 'descendant' of the Tsauke whom the Hlengwe regard as their first king, and whose son was called Xioko-Xa-Humba-He (he who brings fire in a shell). There is a district called Chauke north of Lorenzo Marques in the area once pillaged by marauding Zulu warriors. Henri Junod heard a marching song which told of this pillaging:

Nangu moya wa tshisizwe!
Inkonyana ya ndlopfu inhlezio baen

We are the fire which burns the country!
The calf of the elephant is exposed on the
plain

I. Schapera preserved the following Tswana praise poem:

They shouted, the people of the upper zone,
they shouted their voices out,
when they saw it strolling, the elephant of
Shakge.

A Tinyandhayeya Vavanuna Va Tindlopfu!

- Call: A tinyandhayeya vavanuna va tindlopfu
Ti le ku Chauke Mudlayi-Ndlopfu!
- Response: Hi herile ti le ku Chauke-e-e
Hi va kuma vaye bela na mihloti
Va rila mavele
- Call: Ko tinyandhayeyo vavanuna he tindlopfu
ti le ka
Chauke Mutlhonyi-Ndlopfu !
- Response: Hi herile ti le ku Chauke-e-e
Hi va kuma vava bela na mihloti
Va rila mavele
- Call: A tinyandhayeya vavanuna va tindlopfu
Gaza ti le ka Chauke Mudlayi-Ndlopfu!
- Response: Hi herile ti le ku Chauke-e-e
Hi va kuma vava bela na mihloti
Va rila mavele

Come and Help, Men - Elephants !

- Call: Come and help, men - elephants!
They are at Chauke's, Elephant-Killer!
- Response: We have no hope, because of them
We found people
Mourning for their corn
- Call: Men, a herd of elephants
Is at Chauke's, Elephant-Killer!
- Response: We have no hope, because of them
We found people
Mourning for their corn
- Call: Men, a herd of elephants
Is in Gaza at Chauke's place, Elephant-
Killer !

Response: We have no hope, because of them
We found people
Mourning for their corn

This is a second version of the elephant song. It employs a synonym for "Elephant-Killer" - Mutlhonyi-Ndlopfu, "Elephant-Shooter" - and also mentions the place-name Gaza. Gaza is north of Lorenzo Marques and was once the seat of Nghunghunyane. Many Transvaal Tsonga can name ancestors and even living relatives across the border in the Gaza district of Mozambique; this is due to the cross-sectional nature of the nineteenth century migration - clans split along a north-south axis roughly corresponding to the path of the Limpopo River, so that today a north-south traveler would encounter members of practically all of the clans on both sides of the international border.

References cited:

- Junod, Henri A.: The Life of a South African tribe.
London: Macmillan 1927.
Van Warmelo, N.J.: A preliminary survey of the
Bantu tribes of South Africa.
Pretoria: Government Printer 1935.
(Ethnological Publication 5.)

Schapera, I.: Praise poems of Tswana chiefs.
Oxford: Clarendon Press 1965.

Pronunciation guide:

(given only for sounds where the reader might be in doubt)

<u>c</u>	as <u>ch</u> in church
<u>g</u>	as <u>g</u> in get
<u>h</u>	always as an independent aspirate, never as in the English combinations th or sh
<u>g</u>	rather like <u>k</u> but with a click
<u>sw</u>	as <u>sw</u> but slightly whistled
<u>x</u>	as <u>sh</u> in shut
<u>v</u>	as <u>y</u> in yes

Stress generally falls on the penultimate syllable.

Time, place, and performers of the recordings:

The song-texts were tape - recorded during the following times:

December		1968
February	- April	1969
June	- August	1969
October	- December	1969
January	- March	1970
May	- July	1970
September		1970

The places and performers (main song-leaders) were as follows:

Sibasa	Mavila Maganu Kambisa Maxele Dayina Manghosi
Shingwidzi	Mijaja Khubayi Elias Chavalala Mamayila Makhubele Joseph Maphophe
Tzaneen	Phineas Manganji Nyanina Khubayi Mphemphu Nyani
Moamba	Munyamani Makhubele Mujaji Baloyi Yimisa Maswanganyi
Dumela	Klass Maluleka Moses Mageza Elphy Mathye
Magude	Gavaza Shivonivoni Rose Madoka Lucas Matale Yimisa Mageza
Mapai	Florence Ngoveni Sarah Mageza Rachel Chauke