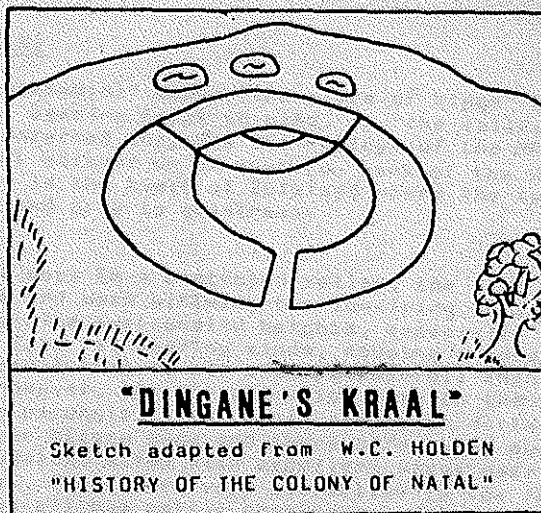


THE MAKHOSINI  
AND THE  
MFOLIZI VALLEY



**"DINGANE'S KRAAL"**

Sketch adapted from W.C. HOLDEN  
"HISTORY OF THE COLONY OF NATAL"

By

G. A. CHADWICK

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Sketch of the camp  
at the Mkhosini  
and Tshwane  
area 1859

### THE ZULUS

The traditional founder of the tribe was Malandela (the follower) who originally settled in the Mhlathuze valley at the place called, it is believed, Odwini, in approximately 1650. As far as can be ascertained, this settlement lay at the foot of the Mandawe Hill (today marked by a large cross) and not very far from the road bridge across the Mhlathuze river. On his death, tradition has it that, as a result of friction, the youngest son, Zulu, moved away to the north, leaving Qwabe to rule over the amaQwabe (people of Qwabe) between what is now Eshowe and the Tugela river. Zulu settled in the valley of the Mkumbane stream near the Mtonjaneni Heights during the 1690's and with the help of his mother, Nozinje, founded the Zulu tribe. Until the time of King Shaka the tribe was small in numbers and of minor importance.

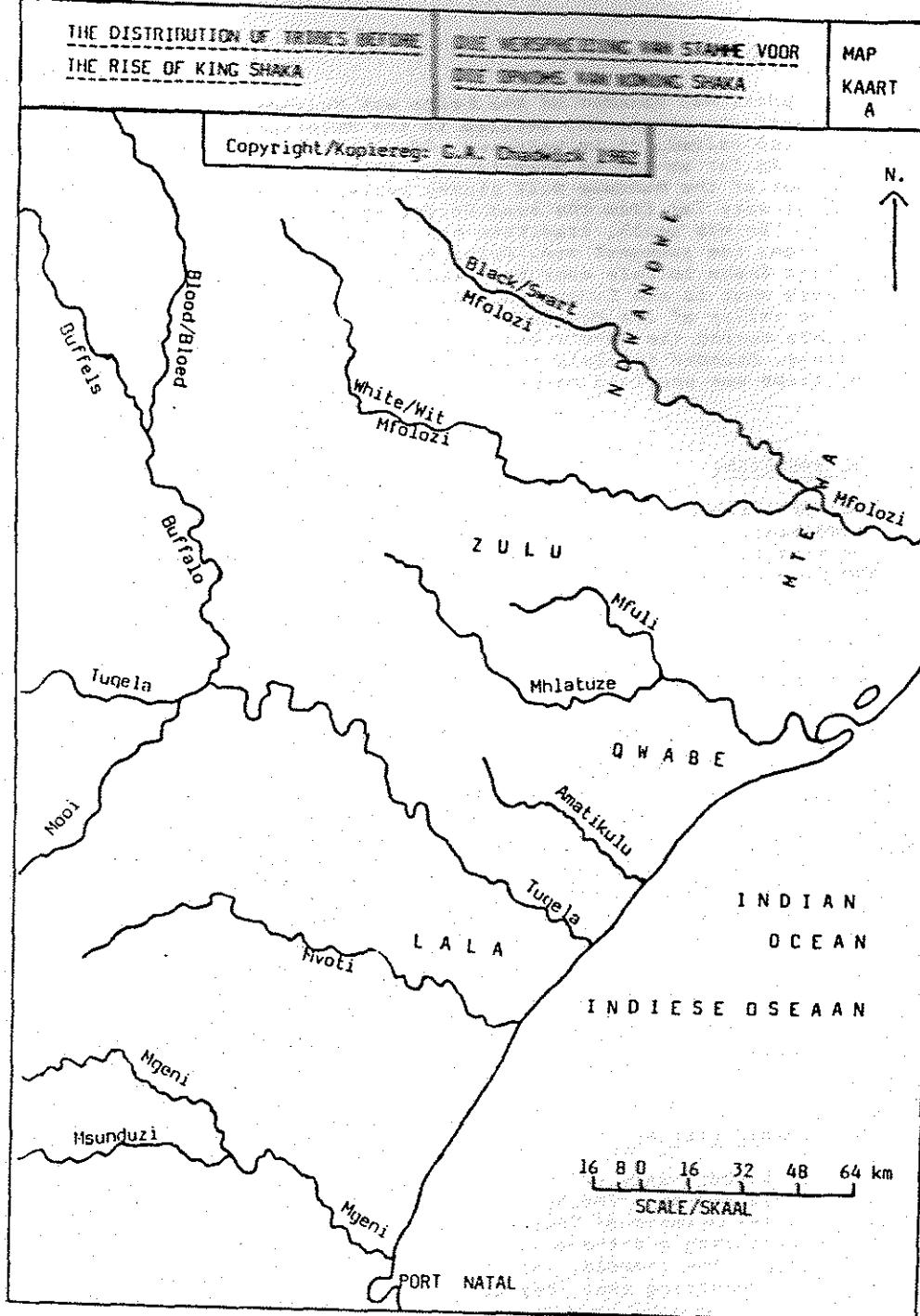
### THE MAKHOSINI

The word "makhosini" means "the place of kings" and is usually translated, bearing Egypt in mind, as "the valley of the kings". The area concerned includes the valleys of the Mkumbane, Nzolo and Mpenbeni streams on the southern bank of the Mfolozi river. This valley is the heart of Zululand where the Zulu tribe had its origin and grew to greatness.

Lying as it does in a protected valley, the area experiences hot summers and warm winters, the low-lying areas being almost frost-free. The surrounding heights, especially the south-east, shelter it from rainbearing winds, causing a local rain shadow, with the result that it has a lower rainfall than the surrounding uplands. However, the streams which rise on the neighbouring heights are perennial. The whole valley is dotted with low hills lying between stream beds and these offer very numerous well-drained homestead sites with excellent views over the surrounding countryside. These were very attractive to the Zulu induna, who liked to see all his cattle grazing round the homestead. The original vegetation was mainly open grassland with forested areas along streams and on the highlands. The withies (izintungo) which could be cut from these forests, as well as in the not far distant Nkandla forest, provided plentiful material for building the typical beehive huts. Grass for thatching was also available locally. Game was plentiful and formed a welcome supplementary food supply.

### THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE ZULUS

This was based mainly on cattle, which were traditionally tended by the boys and men. The Nguni race of cattle shows many similarities to those of Central Africa and Egypt, especially as far as colouring and the shape of the horns is concerned. They are hardy in the lowveld, very tractable and have a good milk supply, considering that they were not scientifically bred. The



colours are mainly white with black points, or white and black in varying sized patches and stippling, as well as white and dark red with similar patches and stippling. The milk was the main food product. Some cattle would be slaughtered at festivals for meat, while the horns and skins were used for ornament, clothing and defence. The unique colouring gave the later Zulu regiments their distinctive shields. Early accounts mention goats, dogs, sheep and fowls, but the dates at which these became common amongst the Nguni are uncertain.

The main agricultural crop was sorghum (millet, amabele), which has been common in Africa from very early times. The conditions in the Makhosini are ideally suited to its cultivation, which took place in irregular patches and not in neat fields. It is a nutritious grain which can be eaten roasted or boiled, and, if boiled and mixed with thick milk, provides a very nourishing meal. It can also be used for brewing beer. Madumbes were an original root crop. Melons, maize and sweet potatoes seem to have been common at an early date, but as some are South American crops, it is unlikely that their use by the Nguni tribes predated discovery of the East African coast by Whites. Agriculture was the work of the women.

Gathering and hunting played a role in the economy, but the latter was of special importance in supplying food, providing sport and apparently being the inspiration for the traditional military tactics of two encompassing horns with the main force between them.

The Zulus were acquainted with the smelting of iron, which was confined to certain families. Local iron ore was used and charcoal was manufactured. A sophisticated system of furnaces with bellows was used, but the quality of the iron was poor. Copper ornaments were used, but there is little evidence of smelting.

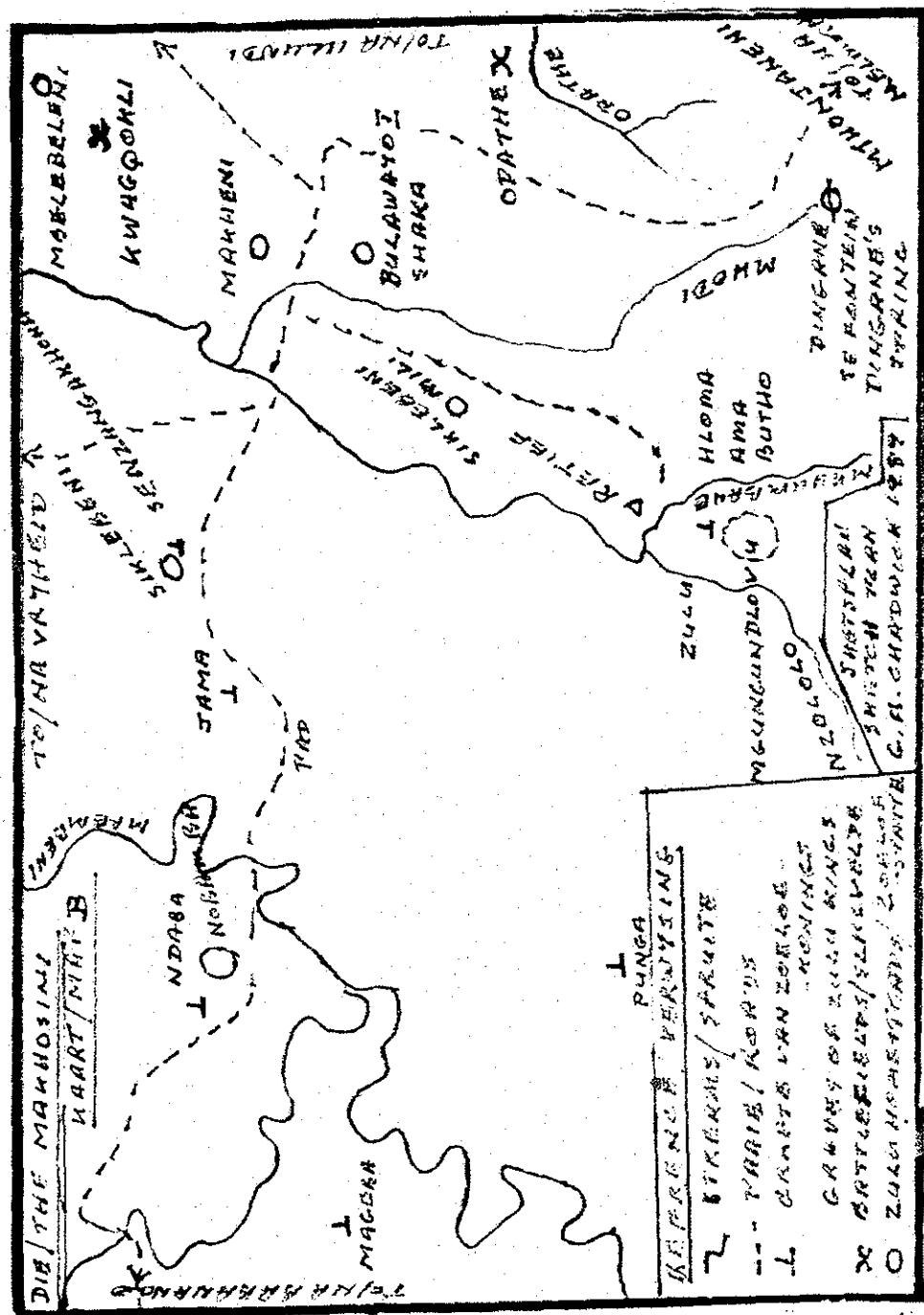
THE ZULU KINGS AND SOME IMPORTANT SETTLEMENTS (See Maps B & C)

It is obviously very difficult to establish a dynasty with accurate dates for a people who had no written records. Oral tradition played, and still plays, a very important part in Zulu culture, but it is difficult to reconcile all the lists of the early kings or to fix the periods during which they ruled. The following is based on information gleaned from Bryant and other writers, but modified by the author. When the king or an important chief died, it was the custom to bury him in the cattle enclosure and to abandon the site. In some cases the name of the homestead might be used elsewhere, in others the site would retain its importance under the original name.

The first Zulu king of whom we have any definite knowledge is Malandela, who appears to have been born in approximately 1597,

to have reached the Mhlathuze valley about 1650 and to have died in 1691. We have no knowledge of his burial place. His son, Zulu, was probably born before the tribe reached the Mhlathuze valley - 1627 seems a reasonable date. After moving away to the valley of the Nkumbane stream he did not live very long, as he seems to have died in 1709. Some authorities are of the opinion that Zulu and another traditional figure, Nkosinkulu, are the same person, while others give the latter a definite place in the line of succession. While he is not included here as one of the Zulu kings, it will be noted that tradition gives him a separate burial place which is indicated on the map. Ntombela is another shadowy Figure. Some traditional accounts list him as a king; others, while admitting that such a person may have existed, assert that he was never king of the Zulus. He is not included in the line of succession given here, but a traditional burial place is indicated on the map. Phunga is also a relatively unknown figure, but it seems he was born in 1657 and ruled from 1709 until his death in 1727. Mageba, whose name indicates that he was a friendly, well-liked person, was born in approximately 1677 and after a rule of some 18 years, died, it would seem, in 1745. He is also known as the builder of "Makheni" (the perfumery or sweet-smelling place). As indicated on the map, this was not far from the site of King Dingane's Mgungundlovu. It played an important part in Zulu tribal life and it became common practice to hold a meeting at this site if a matter of national importance was to be decided. The next incumbent, Ndaba, appears to have been born in 1753. His successor, Jama, whose date of birth seems to have been 1727, comes through traditional accounts as a strong and forceful figure. His headquarters, "Nobamba" (the place of unity or binding together) was situated near the Mpembene stream and became one of the most important sites in Zululand. After ruling for some 28 years, he died in about 1781. His successor, Senzangakhona, seems to have been 24 years of age when he succeeded to the throne, which fixes his date of birth at about 1757. His main homestead was "Siklebene" (the place with the pleasant aspect or view) and became one of the most sacred spots in Zululand. It had been the custom of the Zulus to keep a royal coil or "inkatha", which consisted of a python skin into which the nail clippings, hair, body dirt, etc., of the king was placed. It was symbolic of the Zulu people. The first definite information we have about the "inkatha" is that it was kept at Siklebeni.

King Shaka was born in 1787, came to power in 1816 and ruled until his murder in 1828. As is well-known, he led the Zulu nation to military might and territorial expansion. During the first period of his rule, before the death of Dingiswayo, under whose protection he operated, his main homestead appears to have been situated just south-west of the junction of the Vryheid road with that from Melmoth to Ulundi. After the death of Dingiswayo, when he became completely independent, this homestead was enlarged and given the name "Bulawayo" (the place of the persecuted one). After he overran the territory southwards to the Tugela River, he established a second Bulawayo on a ridge about twelve kilometres east of Eshewe, not far from



the Mandawe Hill. When his armies swept further south his great place was moved to "Dukuza" (the place which was so large that one could become lost in it. This was on the site of the present town of Stanger, where he also lies buried. King Shaka was thus the first Zulu king to leave the Makhosini. After the defeat of Zwide he established several military complexes on the Ulundi plain north of the Mfolozi River.

King Dingane, who ruled from 1828 to 1840, moved back to the Makhosini and established his headquarters at Mgungundlovu (the secret meeting place of the great elephant). It is interesting to note that, despite the fact that he had been instrumental in murdering King Shaka, he established a small settlement nearby which he also called "Dukuza". This was intended to be the spiritual resting place of King Shaka.

Rather surprisingly, when King Mpande came to the throne he moved to the north bank of the Mfolozi river and established his royal headquarters at Nodwengu on the Ulundi plain, very near to the present Holiday Inn. When he died in 1872 he was buried there.

His son, Prince Cetshwayo, who was proclaimed king by the Zulus at a ceremony held at Makheni, but formally recognised by Sir Theophilus Shepstone at Mlambongwenya, also established his chief residence on the Ulundi plain. This was at Ondini, some five kilometres east of Nodwengu. It had a beautiful view across the plain to the twin peaks of the Mabedlane (the breasts) and the hills of Zululand to the west. As a result of the Anglo-Zulu War, he was defeated, deposed and Ondini was burnt. In 1882 he was reinstated with curtailed powers. He established a new headquarters to the north of the old one, also called Ondini, but was attacked and wounded by Zibhebhu. He was forced to flee to the Nkandla Forest and eventually to Eshowe, where he died in 1884. He lies buried on a spur at the southern foot of the Nkandla range.

His son, King Dinizulu, who had a very chequered career, is buried near the Mpenbeni stream. King Solomon and King Cyprian Bhekuzulu ruled from Nongoma, as does the present king, Zwelethini Goodwill ka Bhekuzulu.

Two other interesting royal residences in the Makhosini were "Mbelebeleni" and "Siklebeni II". The former was situated some two kilometres south of the present Mfolozi bridge and was a very large homestead, dating from Shakan times and visited by many early travellers. The latter was a military complex, some five kilometres north of Mgungundlovu. It was in use at the time of the Anglo-Zulu War and the "inkatha", or royal coil, was housed there. When many royal homesteads were burnt by the British after the battle of Ulundi (4 July 1879) this homestead was set on fire and the "inkatha" destroyed.



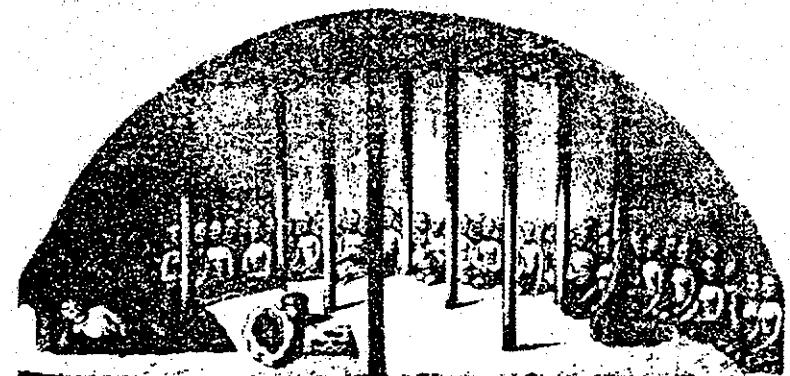
King Shaka

Koning Shaka



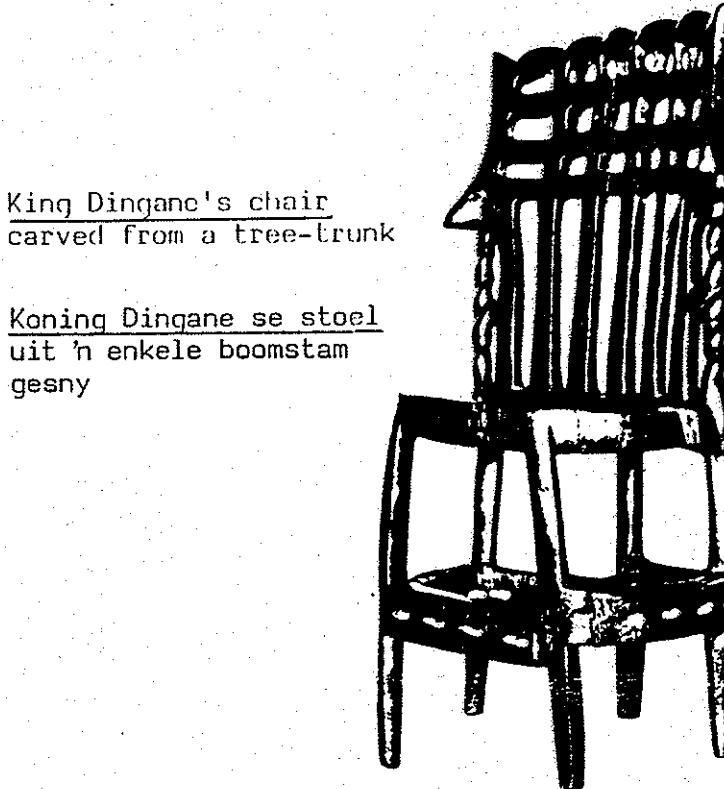
King Dingane (from "Gardiner's Journey to the Zoolu Country")

Koning Dingane (uit „Gardiner's Journey to the Zoolu Country")



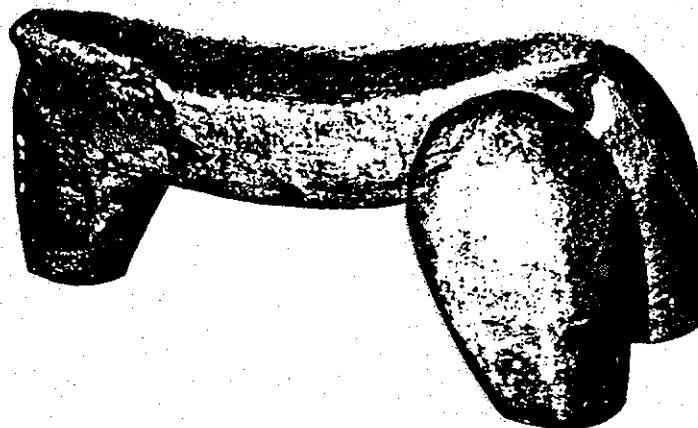
Interior of King Dingane's house (from "Gardiner's Journey to the Zoolu Country")

Koning Dingane se hut (uit „Gardiner's Journey to Zoolu Country")



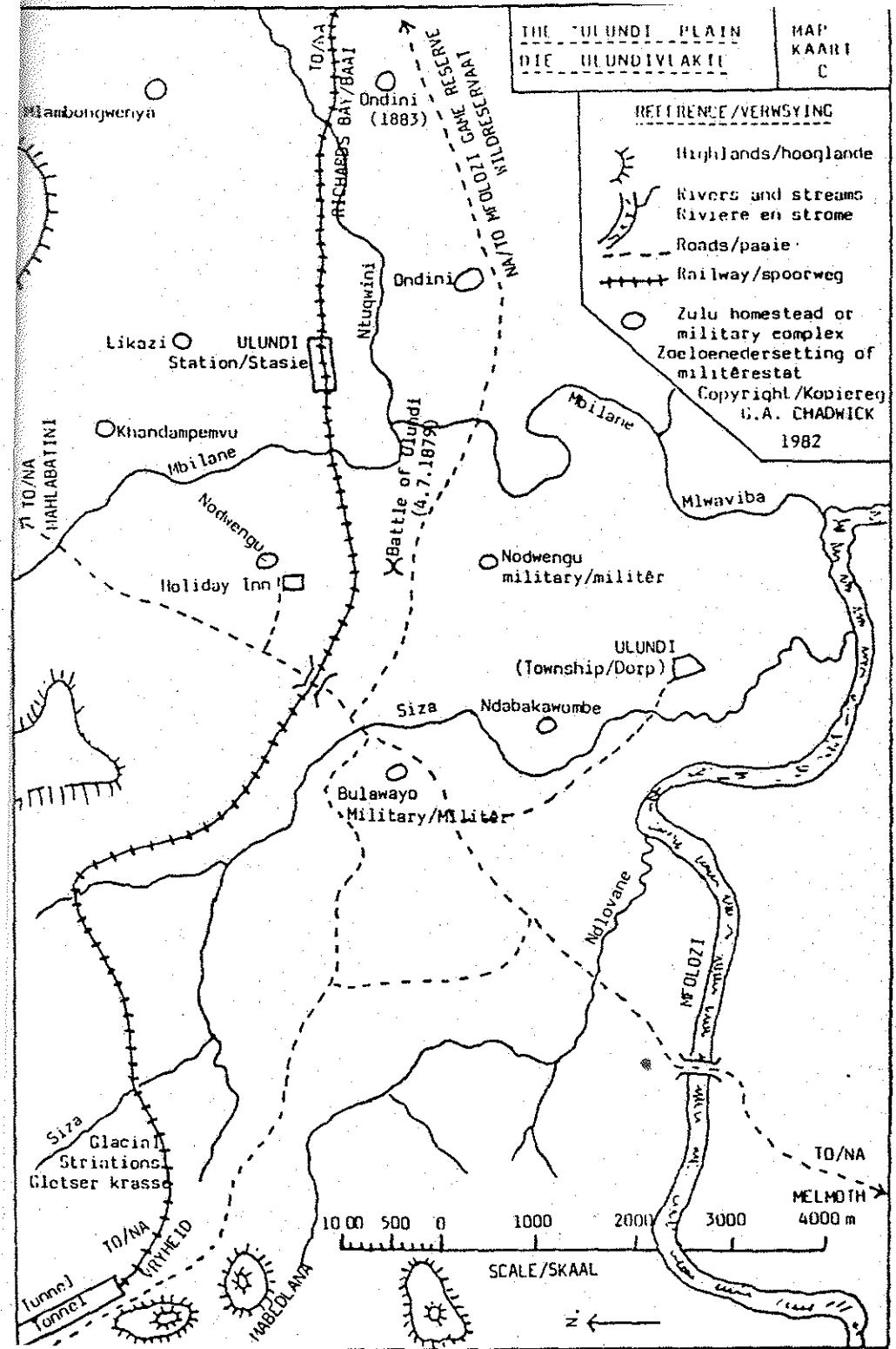
King Dingane's chair  
carved from a tree-trunk

Koning Dingane se stoel  
uit 'n enkele boomstam gesny



King Dingane's "isicamelo" or head-rest

Koning Dingane se „isicamelo" of kopstut



During the time of King Mpande and King Cetshwayo, many royal military complexes were established on the Ulundi plain. The Nodwengu military complex lay approximately one kilometre south of the battlefield monument, while the "Ndabakawombe" residence was about two kilometres to the south-west. Many accounts place King Shaka's "Bulawayo" residence on the banks of the Siza stream, very near the present road bridge. Seeing that this area was under the control of Zwide when King Shaka built his residence, this is manifestly impossible. However, it is correct that there was a large military complex of that name on this site during the time of King Cetshwayo. "Khandampemvu" lay about two kilometres north of the present Ulundi railway station while "Likazi" was nearer, but somewhat to the east. Mlambongwenya, where King Cetshwayo was "crowned" by Sir Theophilus Shepstone, lay about three kilometres north-east of the station.

#### SOME IMPORTANT SITES WHICH CAN BE VISITED

##### Nodwengu Royal Residence

This is a KwaZulu monument and lies a few hundred metres from the Holiday Inn. It would appear that the homestead was much larger than the fenced area which surrounds King Mpande's grave. After his death the homestead was abandoned and no remains of hut floors have been found.

##### Battle of Ulundi

Refer to the pamphlet obtainable on site.

##### Ondini

Ondini was built by King Cetshwayo in 1873 and was reputed to be a replica of Mgungundlovu. Similarly, it included an "isigodlo" or royal living quarters, as well as barracks for various regiments. After the Battle of Ulundi on 4 July 1879, it was burnt by the British. The burning thatch and wood which fell on the floors baked and preserved them. Luckily, a large number have remained relatively undamaged. The site is a national monument. A number of floors have been cleared for viewing. The shape and layout of the complex is in the process of being surveyed, while a number of huts have been reconstructed.

##### KwaGqokli

KwaGqokli, the scene of King Shaka's victory over Zwide in 1818, is indicated by a cairn and inscription on the roadside.

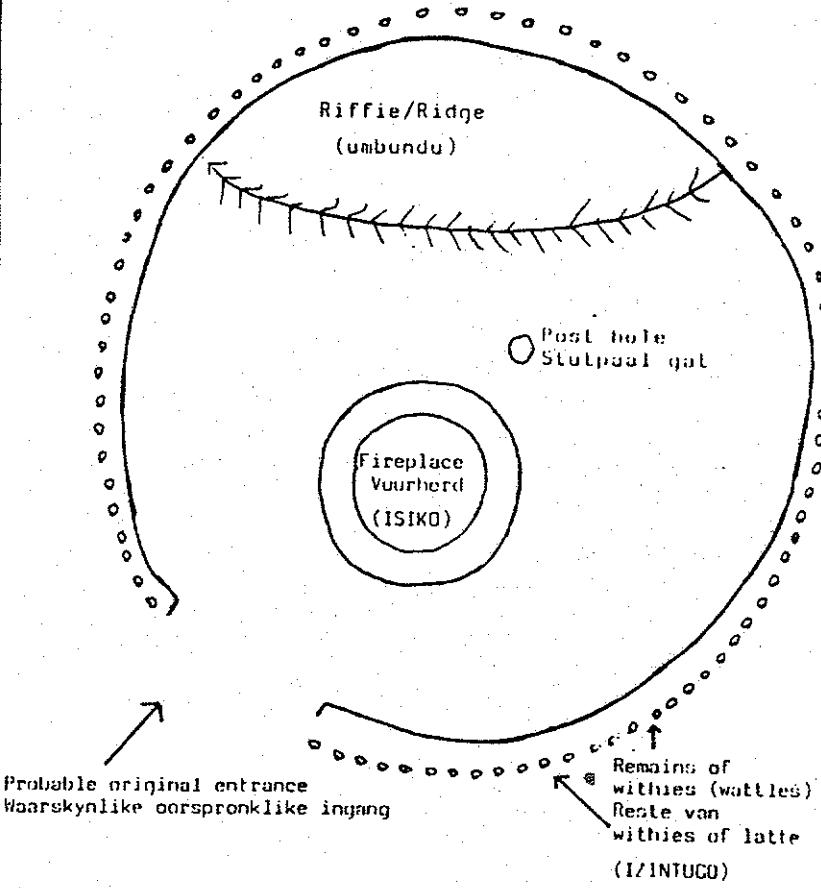
#### MGUNGUNDLOVU

DIAGRAM/SKEIS

A TYPICAL HUT FLOOR / VERTEENWOORDIGENDE HUTVLOER

e.g. THE ONE TO THE LEFT OF THE ENTRANCE GATE TO THE FENCED AREA  
b.v. DIE EEN LINKS VAN DIE HEK IN DIE OMHEINDE GEBIED

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### Mqungundlovu (See diagram)

The royal residence was built by King Dingane in 1828 and probably consisted of 1,700 to 2,000 huts. The population was in the vicinity of 10,000 or 12,000, as it housed eight regiments, each of which was about 1,000 strong. It was here that the Voortrekker leader, Piet Retief, and his men were murdered on 6 February 1838. When the Voortrekkers approached the site on 20 December 1838, after the Battle of Blood River, they found it in flames. Since then it has been deserted.

When the typical beehive huts were built, the floors were made of antheap (isiduli) mixed with some local gravel and water and laid to a thickness of 3-10cms. They were smoothed and polished with round stones and, in some cases, may have been treated with blood and/or fat. The size varied very considerably. Some of the huts in the isigodlo were very large, with several supporting poles, while in the military section, they were much smaller. When the burning thatch and wood fell on the floors many were baked hard, and as a result, have been preserved as a unique cultural heritage. The whole site is a national monument and recent investigations and restoration work have revealed many interesting features. In many cases the fireplaces (amaziko) have been preserved, while in some cases the post holes in the floors are still clearly visible and charcoal has been found in some. A number of floors have a clearly defined ridge (umbundu) along one side, indicating the sacred part of the hut where special personal belongings were kept. A brewery (ixhibe) has been found with holes in the floor for brew pots. Around the outside of some floors, the burnt remains of the withies or wattles (izintungo) which bore the thatch, have been found.

### Battle of Opathe Gorge and the Mfolozi valley

This was fought between the Voortrekkers and the Zulus on 27 December 1838. A fine view down the gorge can be obtained from the gravel quarry at the foot of the Mtonjaneni Heights. (Please refer to pamphlet)

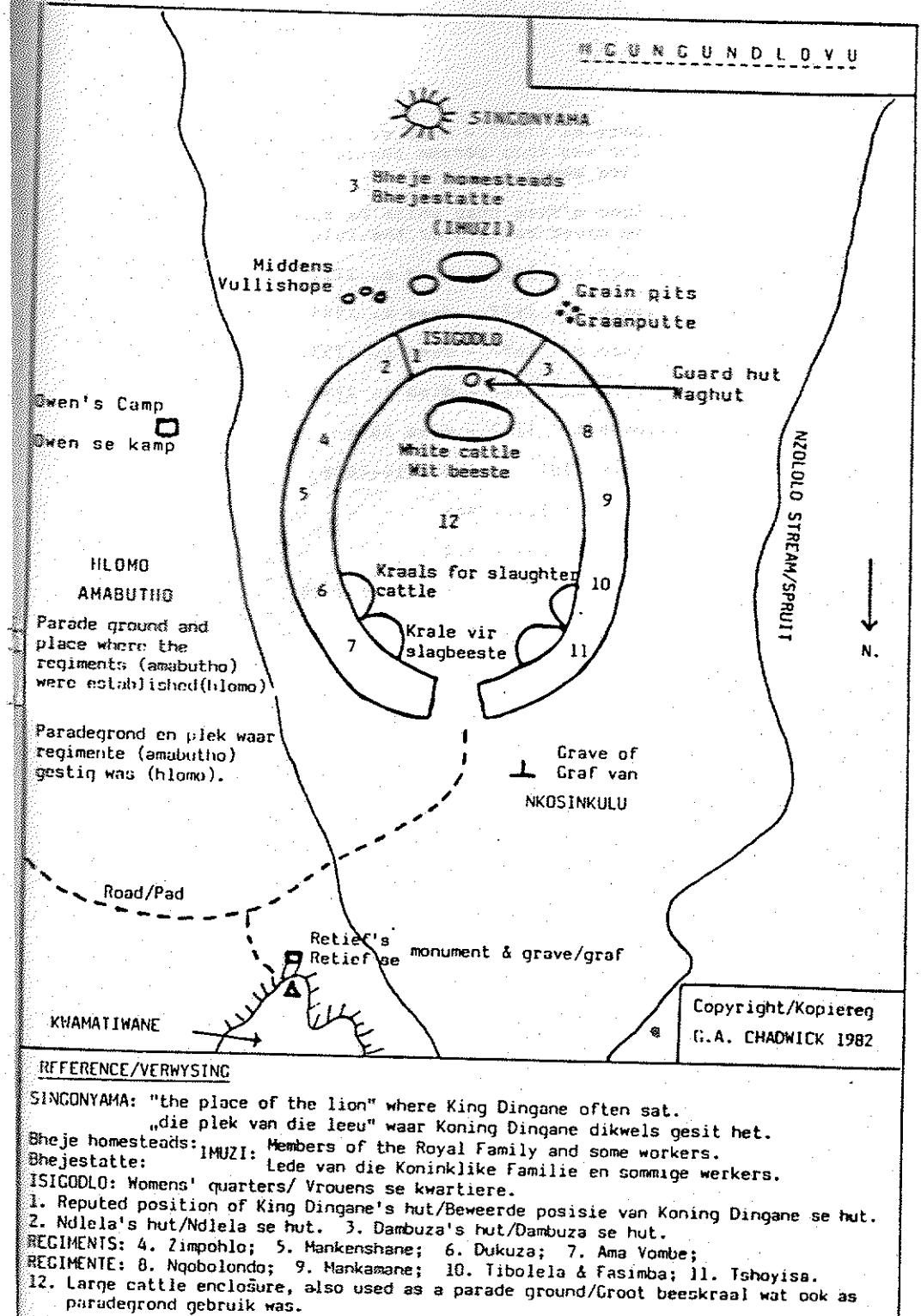
### Dingane's Spring

This is indicated by a signpost on the Mtonjaneni and can be reached by a footpath.

### LIST OF ZULU KINGS FOR EASY REFERENCE (See Map B)

As mentioned, considerable doubt exists as to the identity of certain kings. The following list is based on information gleaned from Bryant and modified by the author.

**MALANDELA.....**.....born c. 1597 - died c. 1691



ZULU.....born c. 1627 - died c. 1709  
(Or was this person really Nkosinikulu?  
See above.)

NTOMBELA.....Some affirm that while he might have existed,  
he never ruled over the Zulus.

PHUNGA.....born c. 1657 - died c. 1727

MAGEBA.....born c. 1677 - died c. 1745

NDABA.....born c. 1697 - died c. 1753

JAMA.....born c. 1727 - died c. 1781

SENZANGAKHONA.....born c. 1757 - died 1816

SHAKA.....born 1787 - ruled 1816-1828

DINGANE.....reigned 1828-1840

MPANDE.....reigned 1840-1872

CETSHWAYO.....reigned 1872-1879. Died 1884

DINIZULU.....reigned 1884-1888  
and 1898-1907

SOLOMON MAPHUMZANA..reigned 1916-1933

PRINCE MSHIYENI KA DINIZULU...Regent 1933-1948

CYPRIAN BHEKUZULU...ruled 1948-1968

PRINCE ISRAEL MCWAYIZENI KA SOLOMAN...Regent 1968-1971

ZWELITHINI GOODWILL...1971-

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