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Magoma:  
Xhosa Resistance to the Advance of  
Colonial Hegemony (1798-1873)

by

Timothy J. Stapleton

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

at

Dalhousie University

Halifax, Nova Scotia

August, 1993

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ISBN 0-315-93741-6

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Physiological 0989  
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Social 0451





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	iv
List of Maps, Illustrations and Tables	v
Abstract	vi
List of Abbreviations	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
Note on Pronunciation	ix
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: "The Mirror of Nothonto": Maqoma's Formative Years (1798-1819).	20
Chapter 2: "Leaning Against the Mountains of Mngwazi": The Evolution, Extortion, and Eviction of Maqoma's Kat River chiefdom (1820-29).	44
Chapter 3: "The Black Snake That Crosses Rivers": Maqoma's Regency and Resistance (1829-35).	84
Chapter 4: "War Does Not Make Us Rich": Maqoma's Decline (1836-47).	135
Chapter 5: "The Leopard of Fordyce": Maqoma's Return (1848-53).	194
Chapter 6: "Are You a Chief and Led by Black Men?": Maqoma's Role in the Xhosa Cattle-Killing (1853-57).	230
Chapter 7: "On the White Man's Island": The Fannished Chief (1858-73).	267
Conclusion	295
Bibliography	311

# LIST OF MAPS, ILLUSTRATIONS AND TABLES

## MAPS

The Eastern Cape 1811-19	42
The Amatola Region 1811-19	43
The Eastern Cape 1820-29	82
The Amatola Region 1820-29	83
Colonial Dispossession 1829-35	134
The Glenelg Period 1836-46 (Eastern Cape)	192
The Glenelg Period 1836-46 (Amatola Region)	193
British Kaffraria 1847-53	227
The Outbreak of the War of Mlanjeni 1850	228
Governor Cathcart's Map of the Waterkloof 1852	229
British Kaffraria 1853-57	266

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Maqoma c.1860	16
Maqoma and his wife Katye c.1860	17

## TABLES

Maqoma's Place in Xhosa Royal Genealogy	18
The Progeny of Maqoma	19

## Abstract

While Maqoma was the most renowned Xhosa chief of South Africa's nineteenth century frontier wars, he was the victim of considerable slander by colonial officials and subsequent settler historians. Characterized as a drunken troublemaker and an erratic and volatile ruler, Maqoma's natural truculence and continued rustling from the nearby settlers was said to have caused the Anglo-Xhosa conflicts of 1835 and 1850-53. In fact, nothing could have been farther from the truth. Upon closer examination of colonial and missionary documents and Xhosa oral traditions, it is possible to reconstruct a much different and far more accurate image of the much maligned Maqoma.

Born in 1798, Maqoma was the eldest son of Ngqika, king of the Rharhabe division of the Xhosa nation. Repulsed by his father's ceding of the land between the Fish and Keiskamma rivers to the Cape Colony, Maqoma became committed to regaining his homeland. Moving west from Ngqika's kraals, he slipped back into his former territory in 1822 to found a new chiefdom on the banks of the Kat River. Despite taking every effort to placate the whites, Maqoma was hounded continually by colonial cattle and labour raids and finally expelled from his territory in 1829. Since Ngqika died while his heir, Sandile, was still an uncircumcised minor, Maqoma was made the regent. Faced with increased aggression from the colony, Maqoma, in 1834, had no alternative but to fight in order to allay further dispossession. Although the Rharhabe were conquered by colonial invasion in 1835, by 1837 a cost conscious colonial office had withdrawn British troops from Xhosaland. After Sandile entered manhood in 1840, Maqoma attempted to usurp this weak and sickly heir but was foiled by European missionaries. Orthodox history maintains that after Maqoma accepted the supremacy of Sandile, the former fell into alcoholism, dropped out of mainstream Xhosa politics, and retired early from Sandile's war against the colony in 1846 because of a burning desire for liquor. These assumptions are absolutely false. Throughout the 1840's Maqoma effectively ruled his personal subjects, strove to maintain peace with the colony and objected to Sandile's resistance because he knew it would lead to devastation. The imposition of colonial rule over the Rharhabe followed Sandile's surrender in 1847 and once the British set about destroying chiefly authority, Maqoma had little choice but to resist. From 1850-53 Maqoma's guerrilla campaign in the mountains, forests, and valleys of the Waterkloof frustrated the most skilled British officers. Ultimately, war-induced famine, aggravated by a colonial scorched earth policy, forced the Rharhabe to abandon their strongholds and submit to European domination. While Maqoma has been described as a deluded believer in the millenarian Cattle-Killing prophecies of 1856-57, this previously misunderstood catastrophe was actually a movement of frustrated Xhosa commoners who sought to oust their discredited aristocracy. Maqoma's covert attempts to undermine the Cattle-Killing failed and with the complete loss of Xhosa power which followed the British imprisoned him on Robben Island for twelve years. Paroled in 1869, the chief attempted to settle on his stolen land but was re-banished to the infamous island prison where he died under mysterious circumstances in 1873. Despite his extraordinary tenacity, flexibility and political and martial skills, Maqoma became the tragic victim of an advancing colonial juggernaut.

# List of Abbreviations

CA	Cape Archives
CCP	Cape Parliamentary Paper
CL	Cory Library (Grahamstown)
CO	Colonial Office
GH	Government House (Cape Town)
GMS	Glasgow Missionary Society
KWT	King William's Town
LG	Lieutenant-Governor
LMS	London Missionary Society
MS	Manuscript
MSB	Grey Collection
NA	Natal Archives
PP	British Parliamentary Paper
PRO	Public Records Office
SAL	South African Library
TAM	Tamacha
UW	University of the Witwatersrand

## Acknowledgements

Many institutions and individuals assisted me in the production of this work. I would like to thank Dalhousie University and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for their financial assistance. This thesis would not have been possible without the advice and encouragement of Professors J.E. Flint and J.B. Webster who both acted as my supervisors during the final years before their respective retirements. I would also like to thank Professor J.L. Parpart for her valuable comments on various drafts. My colleagues at Dalhousie, Julius Adekunle, Wilson Ogbomo and Apollos Nwauwa, offered unforgettable comradeship.

I am indebted to a multitude of people in South Africa who helped me with research. In Cape Town the staffs of the State Archives and South African Library were consistently efficient. Special thanks goes to the staff of the Cory Library in Grahamstown, notably Jackson Vena and Cecilia Blight, for their patience, understanding and guidance. The Cory Librarian, Sandy Rowolt, graciously permitted me to examine her typescript of the journal of the Reverend James Laing which proved to be an invaluable source on Maqoma. Julian Cobbing, Alan Webster and Jurg Richner, all of Rhodes University, opened my mind to new ways of looking at South African history. I would like to express my gratitude to all those who assisted with my fieldwork, particularly Wongo Jonono who worked as guide and interpreter, Chiefs S.M. Burns-Ncamashe and L.W. Maqoma for supplying lists of potential informants and Denver Webb for showing me little known historical sights in Ciskei.

Finally, deepest thanks go to my parents to whom I owe everything.

## Note on Pronunciation

The Xhosa language employs three distinctive clicks which are consonant sounds produced by allowing air to pass into the mouth. Represented by the letter "c", the dental click is a sucking motion with the tip of the tongue on the front teeth as in the English expression of annoyance written "tisk, tisk". The palatal click, symbolized by a "q", is produced by pulling the tip of the tongue sharply away from the front of the hard palate and sounds similar to a cork popping off a wine bottle. Finally, the lateral click involves placing the tip of the tongue on the roof of the mouth and releasing air on one side of the mouth between the tongue and the cheek. This sound is represented by the letter "x" and is comparable to the noise Hollywood cowboys use to call their horses.

There are several other important features in the pronunciation of Xhosa words. Symbolizing a guttural, hissing sound, the letter "r" is similar to the Scots' "ch" in loch and the "g" in Afrikaans. Consequently, in the nineteenth century Europeans often wrote "Kreli" for Sarhili and "Khakhabe" for Rharhabe. Usually functioning as an aspirate, the letter "h" is often placed with another consonant. As a result "Phato" begins with an aspirated "p" not an "f" and "th" is an aspirated "t" and not the English "th".

Before Xhosa orthography was standardized, Europeans frequently varied the spelling of words and names which contained unfamiliar elements. Therefore, many colonial documents quoted in this thesis write Magoma as "Macomo" or "Makomo" or "Magomo" or another version.

## Introduction

Maqoma was the most renowned Xhosa chief of South Africa's nineteenth century frontier wars. Born in 1793, he was the right hand son of Ngqika, king of the Rharhabe division of the Xhosa nation. Repulsed by his father's ceding of the land between the Fish and Keiskamma rivers to the Cape Colony, Maqoma became committed to regaining his ancestral home. Moving west from Ngqika's kraals, he slipped back into the so-called Neutral Zone in 1822 to found a new chiefdom on the banks of the Kat River. Despite taking every effort to placate the whites, Maqoma was hounded continually by colonial raids and expelled from his territory in 1829. Since Ngqika died in 1829 while his great son, Sandile, was still an uncircumcised minor, Maqoma became the regent. Maqoma, his half-brother Tyali, and Suthu (Sandile's mother and guardian) each ruled roughly a third of the kingdom. Faced with increased military pressure from the colony, Maqoma and Tyali, in 1834, had no alternative but to take up arms in an attempt to prevent further dispossession. Although conquered by colonial invasion in 1835, Maqoma remained the most powerful Rharhabe chief and by 1837 a cost conscious colonial office had ordered British troops to withdraw from Xhosaland. As Sandile's transition to manhood in 1840 also symbolized his installation as the Rharhabe ruler, Maqoma became determined to prevent this weak and sickly heir from inheriting power. However, Maqoma's plot to usurp his younger half-brother through a witchcraft accusation against Suthu was foiled by European missionaries. He was then compelled to accept the supremacy of Sandile. Orthodox history maintains that Maqoma fell into alcoholism, dropped out of mainstream Xhosa politics, loitered around the canteens of Fort Beaufort, and retired early from Sandile's war against the colony in 1846 because of a desire for liquor. The imposition of colonial rule over the Rharhabe followed Sandile's surrender in 1847 and brought Maqoma out of his alleged brandy induced stupor. British Kaffraria had been born.

Throughout the "War of Mlanjeni" (1850-53), Maqoma's guerrilla campaign in the mountains, forests, and valleys of the Waterkloof frustrated the most skilled British officers. Tragically, war-induced famine, aggravated by a colonial scorched earth policy, forced both Sandile and Maqoma to abandon their strongholds and submit to European domination. British Kaffraria had survived. Following the famous and previously misunderstood Cattle-Killing of 1856-57, Maqoma was convicted by a British court martial of receiving stolen goods and sent into exile on Robben Island. Released in 1869, the chief attempted to settle on his stolen land and was re-banished to the infamous island prison where he died in 1873. While Maqoma was arguably the most well known Xhosa ruler of his time, it is surprising that he has not been the subject of a biography. Before undertaking such a project, it is necessary to examine how previous writers and historians have viewed this chief and what sources can be employed in producing his biography.

#### Historiographical Overview

The first books which mention Maqoma were published during his lifetime and served as mere propaganda for various European interests. Justifying the settler desire for colonial expansion into Xhosaland, Robert Godlonton, editor of the Grahamstown Journal, compiled two collections of newspaper reports. The first described Maqoma as one of the primary leaders of a Xhosa invasion of the Cape Colony in 1834 who was conquered during the European retaliation of the following year. Similarly, Godlonton's second collection portrays the chief as a supporter of the prophet Mlanjeni who convinced the Xhosa to rebel against colonial rule.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, a small group of humanitarian missionaries, such as Thomas Pringle and James Read, Jr., opposed settler expansion and described Maqoma as a victim of continual and unjustified colonial

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Godlonton, A Narrative of the Irruption of the Kafir Hordes (Grahamstown, 1836), and Robert Godlonton and Edward Irving, Narrative of the Kafir War, 1850-51-52 (Grahamstown, 1852).



dispossession.<sup>2</sup>

After Maqoma's exile and death, several former colonial officials and soldiers wrote memoirs which justified colonial conquest of the Xhosa by deriding this chief. In 1864 the widow of John Mitford Bowker, a prominent eastern Cape settler, published a collection of her late husband's speeches and letters which criticized Pringle and the humanitarian lobby for encouraging and obscuring the chief's depredations against the colony.<sup>3</sup> James McKay, a veteran of the 1850-53 conflict, wrote that:

When the red demon of war burst his fetters, and the savage determination of the Kafir was formed to annihilate the white man, the drunken Macomo reformed, becoming an able councillor and warrior, and with all the braggadocio of a barbarian, daring the "children of the foam" (Europeans) to approach his mountain home.<sup>4</sup>

Charles Brownlee, son of a missionary and commissioner to the Xhosa in the 1850's, claimed that the chief was "a clever and unscrupulous" cattle rustler who provoked the wars of 1834-35 and 1850-53 but was too debauched with alcohol to fight in 1846-47.<sup>5</sup> Although every author of this period vilified Maqoma, they harboured a sneaking admiration for the chief's intelligence and martial skill. According to John Maclean, former chief commissioner of British Kaffraria, Maqoma was "the greatest politician and best warrior" among the Xhosa.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Thomas Pringle, Narrative of a Residence in South Africa (London, 1835), and James Read, Jr. The Kat River Settlement in 1851: A Series of Letters Published in the South African Commercial Advertiser (Cape Town, 1852).

<sup>3</sup>John Mitford Bowker, Speeches, Letters and Important Papers (Grahamstown, 1864), p.3.

<sup>4</sup>James McKay, Reminiscences of the Last Kafir War (Cape Town, 1871), p. 66.

<sup>5</sup>Charles Brownlee, Reminiscences of Kaffir Life and History (Lovedale, 1896), p. 309.

<sup>6</sup>John Maclean, A Compendium of Kafir Laws and Customs (Cape Town, 1906), p. 136.

The prolific writing of George McCall Theal at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries signalled the beginning of the study of South African history as an academic discipline. Theal was a settler historian who thought of the frontier wars as a clash between European civilization and African barbarism. Continuing the propaganda of Godlonton, Theal portrayed Maqoma as a stock thief and instigator of violence. The chief represented primitive savagery. Of Maqoma's death in 1873, Theal wrote that "it is impossible to feel sorrow for the unfortunate man." The chief's demise was "an illustration of what must happen when civilisation and barbarism come into contact, and barbarism refuses to give way."<sup>7</sup> In the 1920's George Cory, Theal's successor, continued to define Maqoma as a drunken troublemaker and liar who had been encouraged by meddling humanitarians. Condemning the border treaties formulated by Andries Stockenström after the retrocession of Xhosa territory in 1837, Cory claimed that "the year 1842 saw a marked increase in audacity and defiance toward the government. Maqoma was conspicuous in this respect."<sup>8</sup>

This settler view of Maqoma, initiated by Godlonton and continued by Theal and Cory, has been carried into the late twentieth century. In her biography of Henry Somerset, commander of British forces in the eastern Cape during the mid-nineteenth century, Dorothy Rivett-Carnac stated that the chief was expelled from the Kat River in 1829 as "there could be no doubt that Macomo was the trouble-maker whose continued operations would be disastrous to the safety of the frontier."<sup>9</sup> Despite the menace of Maqoma, Somerset diligently maintained the security of the settlers. F.C. Metrowich claimed that "In 1834... Macomo had invaded the

---

<sup>7</sup>G.M. Theal, History of South Africa Since 1795 Vol. 10, (London, 1892), pp. 96 and 172.

<sup>8</sup>G.E. Cory, The Rise of South Africa Vol. 4, (London, 1926), p. 358.

<sup>9</sup>D.E. Rivett-Carnac, Hawk's Eye (Cape Town, 1966), p. 78.

colony with 12,000 tribesmen and laid waste the country-side... After the 1835 War he became a confirmed drunkard and spent most of his time in the canteens of Fort Beaufort."<sup>10</sup> Johannes Meintjes described Maqoma as a noble savage who "strides the Xhosa landscape like a giant, for few were to match his physical and mental powers and passionate nationalism."<sup>11</sup> This view contrasted dramatically with the tragedy of Meintjes' subject, the crippled Sandile. Highly influenced by Brownlee, Theal and Cory, Meintjes portrays Maqoma as a master-mind of Xhosa depredations against the settlers. Blaming the chief for the European-Xhosa conflict of 1835, A. J. Smithers, an ardent fan of Theal, claimed that "Macomo cherished a deep hatred for the white men and everything connected with them as his future life and conduct were to manifest."<sup>12</sup> Although none of these writers were professional historians, their work has done much to maintain a negative image of Maqoma which is prominent in scholarly works such as A.E. du Toit's short biographical account.<sup>13</sup>

Histories written by educated Africans in the early twentieth century represented the first effort to concentrate upon the dynamics of Xhosa society and were more sympathetic to Maqoma than previous white writers. According to the Reverend John Henderson Soga, "Maqoma stood in a rank alone for courage and as an orator."<sup>14</sup> However, the influence of Godlonton and Theal on this writer is betrayed by his claim that Maqoma "plotted with the chief of the House of Ngcangatelo (Tyali) to bring on the war of 1834". Soga stated that Maqoma's "cupidity was aroused by the

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<sup>10</sup>F.C. Metrowich, Frontier Flames (Cape Town, 1968), pp. 193 and 104.

<sup>11</sup>Johannes Meintjes, Sandile: The Fall of the Xhosa Nation (Cape Town, 1971), p. 63.

<sup>12</sup>A.J. Smithers, The Kaffir Wars (London, 1973), p. 138.

<sup>13</sup>A.E. du Toit, "Maqoma", Dictionary of South African Biography Vol. 2, pp. 439-441.

<sup>14</sup>John Henderson Soga, The South-Eastern Bantu (Johannesburg, 1930), p. 170.

herds of cattle belonging to the settlers living near the boundary. These he seized and took home."<sup>15</sup> As the son of the first ordained Xhosa minister, Tiyo Soga, and his Scottish wife, it is not surprising that John Henderson Soga incorporated central elements of settler history into his portrayal of Maqoma. Conversely, Samuel E.K. Mqhayi, a journalist and teacher, was more successful in escaping the settler dominated history of his mission education. A fiery polemic, Mqhayi rejected the concept that Xhosa cattle-rustling had been the root of the frontier wars and laid the blame squarely upon European expansionism. He wrote that "Maqoma was fortunate in his early stages to realize the deceitfulness and oppressiveness of the white nation."<sup>16</sup> Influenced heavily by the writings of nineteenth century British humanitarians such as Pringle, Mqhayi emphasized the equality of Xhosa history to that of Europeans and other African communities. "Mshweshwe founded the kingdom of LuSuthu(sic) with his understanding and his wisdom... but he was the same age as Maqoma... and the land of Mshweshwe was not greater than that of Maqoma, his age-mate among the Xhosas."<sup>17</sup> In a short biographical sketch, Mqhayi describes Maqoma's gradual dispossession by the whites, refers to specific examples of the chief's wisdom as a ruler and judge and ignores colonial allegations of his abuse of alcohol. Based primarily on oral traditions collected in the 1920's, a mere three decades after Maqoma's death, Mqhayi's work is the only surviving source, both documentary and oral, which names a significant number of the chief's sons and daughters.<sup>18</sup>

An early liberal historian, William M. MacMillan sought to address the racial problems of the 1920's and 30's by writing about nineteenth

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 171.

<sup>16</sup>Samuel E.K. Mqhayi, Ityala lamaWele (Lovedale, 1931), p. 91.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 91-103.

century South Africa. Rehabilitating the British humanitarians, particularly John Philip who was active on the eastern frontier during the 1830's, MacMillian portrayed Magoma as a friend of the missionaries who "was by all evidence one of nature's gentlemen and had a great faculty for gaining goodwill, if not respect and esteem." MacMillian continued to describe the chief as the unfortunate victim of deliberate colonial aggression and dispossession and questioned his reputation as a incorrigible rustler. Contrary to settler historians, MacMillian did not see meddling missionaries or Xhosa raids as the cause of the frontier wars. For this pioneering liberal, the voracious colonial desire for additional land and labour had been responsible. According to MacMillian, Magoma went to war with the colony over land grievances. "Magoma's star was an unlucky one, and it is clear that the cause of all his trouble was his natural desire to keep his land".<sup>19</sup>

Succeeding MacMillian as the pioneers of liberal history in South Africa, John Galbraith, Leonard Thompson and Monica Wilson in the 1960's were the first to examine both settler and African societies. Galbraith agreed with MacMillian that "More clearly perhaps than any other chief, Makomo saw the submergence of the tribes and the loss of their lands before the inexorable advance of the Europeans."<sup>20</sup> Shifting emphasis away from the colonial hunger for land and labour, this scholar argued, rather unconvincingly, that Cape expansion was rooted in London's desire to establish order as opposed to the disorder created by Xhosa cattle rustling. Several years later, Wilson down-played conflict between Europeans and Xhosa on the Cape's eastern frontier by emphasizing the

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<sup>19</sup>W.M. MacMillian, Bantu, Boer and Briton: the Making of the South African Native Problem (Oxford, 1928), pp. 90-91. For a thorough analysis of MacMillian's work see Hugh MacMillian and Shula Marks, (eds.), Africa and Empire: W.M. MacMillian, Historian and Social Critic (London, 1989).

<sup>20</sup>J.S. Galbraith, Reluctant Empire: British Policy on the South African Frontier (Westport, Connecticut, 1963), p. 47.

peaceful interaction of trade and missionary contact. The few lines devoted to Maqoma in The Oxford History are based on MacMillian's view that land grievances caused the chief to fight the colony. However, in another work Wilson called for a full-blown biography of Maqoma which would employ both archival sources and Xhosa oral tradition.<sup>21</sup>

Radical historians of the 1970's criticized the liberals for being blind to the importance of class in the development of social inequalities in South Africa. They claimed that Wilson and others had treated Africans as an undifferentiated mass. As part of a wave of studies on the dynamics and contradictions of pre-colonial African societies, Jeffrey Peires identified Maqoma as part of the dominant chiefly elite which controlled and exploited Xhosa commoners. Unfortunately, this work failed to explain the exact nature of that relationship and simply repeated many ideas initiated by Godlonton and Theal. Peires portrays Maqoma as the prime mover of a Xhosa invasion of the colony in 1834 who then sank into alcoholic obscurity in the 1840's.<sup>22</sup> Referring to the aftermath of the Kat River eviction, Peires states that "Maqoma reacted to his expulsion by stepping up raids on white farms," and claimed that "the Sixth Frontier War of 1834-35 was initiated by the Xhosa to recover their lost lands and to seal their border against the hostile forces which were penetrating their society."<sup>23</sup> In a study of the Cattle-Killing, this historian characterizes Maqoma as an "increasingly erratic" ruler who believed in the millenarian prophecies of Nongqawuse and led his people to ruin.

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<sup>21</sup>M. Wilson and L. Thompson, (ed.), The Oxford History of South Africa Vol. 1, (Oxford, 1969), p. 247; and M. Wilson, "Some Fields for Research", in Christopher Saunders and Robin Derricourt, (eds.), Beyond the Cape Frontier (London, 1974), p. 218.

<sup>22</sup>J.B. Peires, The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of their Independence (Johannesburg, 1981).

<sup>23</sup>J.B. Peires, "The British and the Cape, 1814-1834", in Richard Elphick and Herman Giliomee, (eds.), The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840 (Middletown, Connecticut, 1988), pp. 484 and 489.

Peires' interpretation of this chief contains a bizarre paradox. On one hand he romanticizes Maqoma as "the greatest military mind of his or any other Xhosa generation," while on the other the chief is condemned for his "natural truculence."<sup>24</sup> Generally, Peires' work presents the pre-colonial past as a static "golden age" and portrays the Xhosa as mere victims of colonial aggression.

There are several works which refer to Maqoma but fall outside the mainstream liberal and radical schools. In a post-modernist approach, Clifton Crais has examined the creation of culture and identity in the eastern Cape. Although Maqoma is mentioned throughout, this work reveals nothing new about the chief's personal motives or significance. However, Crais does enhance our understanding of the context in which Maqoma lived, but reduces the chief to one of many faceless players on the stage of history. Furthermore, the absence of African oral tradition and complete reliance on colonial documentary sources represents a profound weakness. Various aspects of this recent work will be dealt with in relevant sections of this thesis.<sup>25</sup> Noel Mostert, a retired journalist, has produced a sweeping epic of the frontier war period. This author is sympathetic to the Xhosa but falls into the old trap of romanticizing pre-colonial society, fails to collect any new oral evidence and makes many factual errors such as referring to Maqoma as Sandile's uncle. Additionally, Mostert's claim that Maqoma simply wanted to become a "gentleman farmer" within the colony is ridiculous given the chief's constant struggle for independence. While Maqoma is obviously Mostert's favourite chief, this book contains many questionable settler assumptions about the former's supposed invasion of the colony in 1834 and alcoholism

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<sup>24</sup>J.B. Peires, The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-57 (Johannesburg, 1989), pp. 67, 15, and 119.

<sup>25</sup>Clifton C. Crais, White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-Industrial South Africa (Cambridge, 1992).

in the 1840's.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps the most serious flaw of both these works is that they mention but fail to deal with Julian Cobbing's fundamental revision of nineteenth century South African history which was first published four years before.

The recent work of Cobbing compels historians to rethink Maqoma's career. The settler, liberal and radical schools unanimously agreed that African migration and state formation in the 1820's and 30's had been caused by the sudden expansion of Shaka's Zulu kingdom. This cataclysm has become commonly known as the "Mfecane". MacMillian stated that Maqoma, who faced the colonial threat from the west, was "caught between two fires, being directly involved in the disorder caused by the irruption among them of refugees fleeing from Chaka who had all the country to the north in a ferment."<sup>27</sup> During the War of 1835 British forces invaded the Transkei where they rescued thousands of these refugees, known as Fingoes, from Xhosa slavery and brought them back to the safety of the colony. However, Cobbing claims that this is a false history which originated from the cover stories of illegal colonial slavers who had been responsible for the devastation in the interior. Since London had banned the slave trade in 1807, British merchants in Natal invented the concept of Zulu expansionism to conceal their own slaving operations. Colonial agents and their Griqua mercenaries in Transorangia employed the same tactic and sent hundreds of captives to the labour-hungry farms of the Cape. Fleeing from slave raids, Africans formed increasingly centralized states, such as Shaka's Zulu Kingdom and Moshweshwe's Lesotho, in order to defend themselves. In 1828 Henry Somerset obscured the real nature of his massive labour raid into Transkei by claiming to have defended the colony and neighbouring Xhosa chiefdoms from a marauding Shakan horde. Later

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<sup>26</sup>Noel Mostert, Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People (New York, 1992).

<sup>27</sup>MacMillian, Bantu, Boer and Briton, pp. 89-90.



historians recorded these cover stories as fact. Consequently, Cobbing attributes the increased violence and African migration and state formation of this period to an interlocking network of European plunder systems originating from the Portuguese at Delagoa Bay, and the British at Port Natal and the Cape Colony.<sup>28</sup>

Building on the work of Cobbing, Alan Webster has demonstrated that the Xhosa chiefs, including Maqoma, did not mount a large-scale invasion of the colony in 1834. After years of providing the colonials with cattle tribute which had failed to prevent repeated expulsions, frustrated warriors made a few isolated, retaliatory stock raids against settler farms. Exaggerating the extent of this disturbance in his reports to London, Governor D'Urban launched an invasion of Xhosaland and seized thousands of people for service on the settler farms in order to alleviate the colonial labour shortage. Since this would have raised considerable disapproval in Britain, local officials invented the myth that these captives and collaborators were Fingo refugees from Natal who the colonial army had emancipated from the Xhosa. Slavery was disguised as humanitarianism. Once again, subsequent writers accepted these reports and incorporated another settler fabrication into South African history.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Julian Cobbing, "Mfecane as Alibi: Thoughts on the Battles of Dithakong and Mbolompo", Journal of African History 29, (1988), pp. 487-519. Also see Julian Cobbing, "Grasping the Nettle: The Slave Trade and the Early Zulu", Seminar Paper, University of Natal, 1990. For a supporting article see John Wright, "Political Mythology and the Making of Natal's Mfecane", Canadian Journal of African Studies 23, 2 (1989), pp. 272-291. For criticism of this revision see J.B. Peires, "Matiwane's Road to Mbolompho: A Reprieve for the Mfecane?" Seminar Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, 1991; E. Eldredge, "Sources of Conflict in Southern Africa, 1800-1830 - The Mfecane Reconsidered", Journal of African History 33 (1992), pp. 1-35; and C. Hamilton, "The Character of Chaka: A Reconstruction of the Making of Shaka as Mfecane Motor", Journal of African History 33 (1992), pp. 37-63.

<sup>29</sup>Alan C. Webster, "Land Expropriation and Labour Extraction Under Cape Colonial Rule: The War of 1835 and the 'Emancipation' of the Fingo", M.A. thesis, Rhodes University, 1991. John Ayliff, one of the agents responsible for capturing labourers in 1835, co-authored a history of the Fingo which cemented the myth of their Natal origin, see John Ayliff and J. Whiteside, History of the Abambo: Generally Known as the Fingos

What impact does this revision have on the interpretation of Maqoma's career? The common impression of this chief as a cattle rustler and master-mind of a Xhosa invasion of the colony in 1834 is immediately subjected to scepticism. How did Maqoma really respond to European intrusion? What other fabrications have been employed to discredit this chief? Did Maqoma actually become an unstable alcoholic who dropped out of mainstream Xhosa politics in the 1840's and refused to participate in the war of 1846-47? Did he really support the catastrophic and seemingly irrational Cattle-Killing prophecies? Why was he re-banished so quickly in 1871?

Other gaps and shortcomings in the orthodox literature raise further questions. Since there is a dearth of information about the internal political, social and economic systems of the Xhosa chiefdoms, how did Maqoma maintain control over his subjects and what were his most important goals? While many scholars, particularly MacMillan, have mentioned the chief's dealings with missionaries there has never been a thorough examination of that relationship and how it changed over time. Was Maqoma genuinely interested in Christianity or did he have other motives in befriending these Europeans? How did the chief respond to western technology and material culture? Finally, how does exploring these questions enhance our understanding of Maqoma's place in South African history?

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(Butterworth, 1912). According to Webster, twentieth century white anthropologists coined the term "Mfengu" as an Africanisation of Fingo. Ayliff's version was then incorporated into more recent scholarship by Richard Moyers, "A History of the Mfengu of the Eastern Cape", Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1976.

### A Note on Sources

There have been few biographies of nineteenth century Africans.<sup>30</sup> This can be attributed, in part, to a lack of detailed sources. Unlike their European counterparts, non-literate chiefs of the pre-colonial and early colonial periods usually did not maintain large collections of personal documents and journals. However, there is a wealth of colonial written evidence regarding Maqoma. More than any other Xhosa chief, European witnesses seemed to take special interest in recording Maqoma's statements and conversations. While many of these documents were written by colonial officials who wished to dispossess the chief, their authenticity can be checked by considering the authors' motivation and cross-referencing to other sources such as the correspondence and diaries of missionaries who were sympathetic to the Xhosa. The same methodology can be applied to newspaper reports. Throughout the early to mid nineteenth century the Grahamstown Journal consistently advocated settler expansionism while the South African Commercial Advertiser represented the views of the small humanitarian lobby. Both sources must be scrutinized diligently. In chapter four there is a classic example of reports from the Grahamstown Journal - which accused Maqoma of leading a raid into the colony - being completely discredited by an official colonial investigation. Unfortunately, most issues are not that easy to resolve and judging the validity of information found in any document remains a matter of personal common sense. All sources are biased and open to question.

Can interviews with the descendants of Maqoma and his subjects expose anything new about this historically prominent yet slandered chief?

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<sup>30</sup>For a few exceptions in South African history see Meintjes, Sandile; P. Sanders, Moshoeshoe (Cape Town, 1975); L. Thompson, Survival in Two Worlds (Oxford, 1975); and Janet Hodgson, Princess Emma (Cape Town, 1987). The latter is the story of Emma, Sandile's eldest daughter who was sent to school in Cape Town in the 1860's. Falling outside the main South African historical schools, Hodgson's book is an interesting study of the bewildering impact of westernization on a Xhosa woman.

Consisting of two villages in Ciskei and a single community in Transkei, the contemporary Jingqi population is small and scattered. However, the previously unrecorded traditions of their elders reveals a considerable quantity of new information about certain aspects of Maqoma's life which are not available from colonial documentary sources. Without this evidence, the details of Jongumsonomvu's circumcision, his relationship with his mother, and his actions at the Battle of Amalinde would remain obscure. Additionally, the similarity of the Xhosa version of the Waterkloof campaign with British accounts illustrates the potential accuracy of oral sources. However, stories about other portions of Maqoma's career, such as his role in the War of 1835, have been lost.

As with colonial documents, these traditions contain problems of bias and distortion which the historian must weigh carefully. Representing the polar opposite of settler history, these stories paint Maqoma as an unflinching hero who fought and died for Xhosa independence. In turn, all informants deny the chief's conflicts with Ngqika and Sandile. Unfortunately, lengthy exposure to literacy has caused young Xhosa to abandon the practise of passing down genealogies and stories from one generation to the next and the rich traditions of Maqoma may not survive another decade. Written history has also contaminated many of these oral sources and the opinions of Xhosa authors, particularly Samuel Mqhayi, have been incorporated into Jingqi traditions. A chieftaincy dispute between Lent Maqoma - descendant of the minor son Makrexana - and Wati Maqoma - descendant of the great son Namba - distorts the evidence as each camp emphasizes tales which support their respective claims. While Lent, who is Ciskei's Minister of Manpower, relates stories which discredit the Namba line, Wati presents his senior genealogy and accuses his competitor of unfairly usurping him through political influence. Separated from the main Maqoma family in Ciskei, the descendants of Kona, the right-hand son, who live in Gqungqe Location in Transkei know very few

detailed stories about the original Maqoma.<sup>31</sup>

The following work is a biography of Maqoma which attempts to redress the character assassination committed against this chief by nineteenth century colonial officials and settlers and more recent historians of South Africa. Obviously, different actors in this story had divergent perceptions of the period and its events. Most whites saw the Xhosa as primitive savages and believed that it was morally right to conquer them. Africans who allied with the Europeans saw collaboration as their best chance for survival in a rapidly changing world. On the other hand, chiefs such as Maqoma viewed the colonials as vicious invaders and their African allies as despicable traitors. Consequently, this biography seeks to balance the historical scales, so long tipped in favour of the settler image of Maqoma, by looking at the nineteenth century, as much as possible, from the perspective of this traditional chief who resisted the advance of white hegemony.

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<sup>31</sup>For a detailed discussion of these oral sources see Timothy J. Stapleton, "The Memory Of Maqoma: An Assessment of Jingqi Oral Tradition in Ciskei and Transkei", History in Africa 1993, in press.

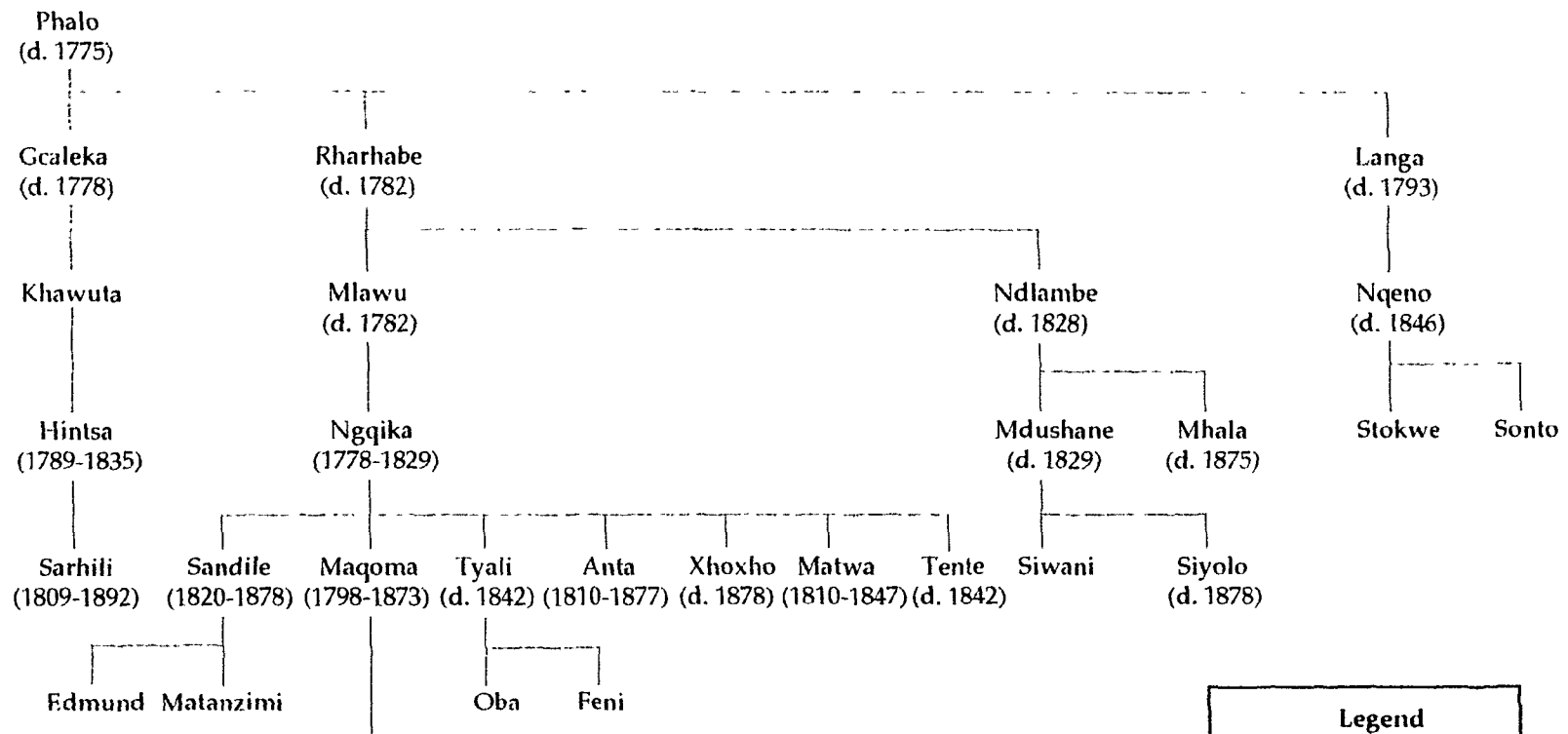


Maqoma c.1860



Maqoma and his wife Katye c.1860

**Table I: Maqoma's Place in Xhosa Royal Genealogy**

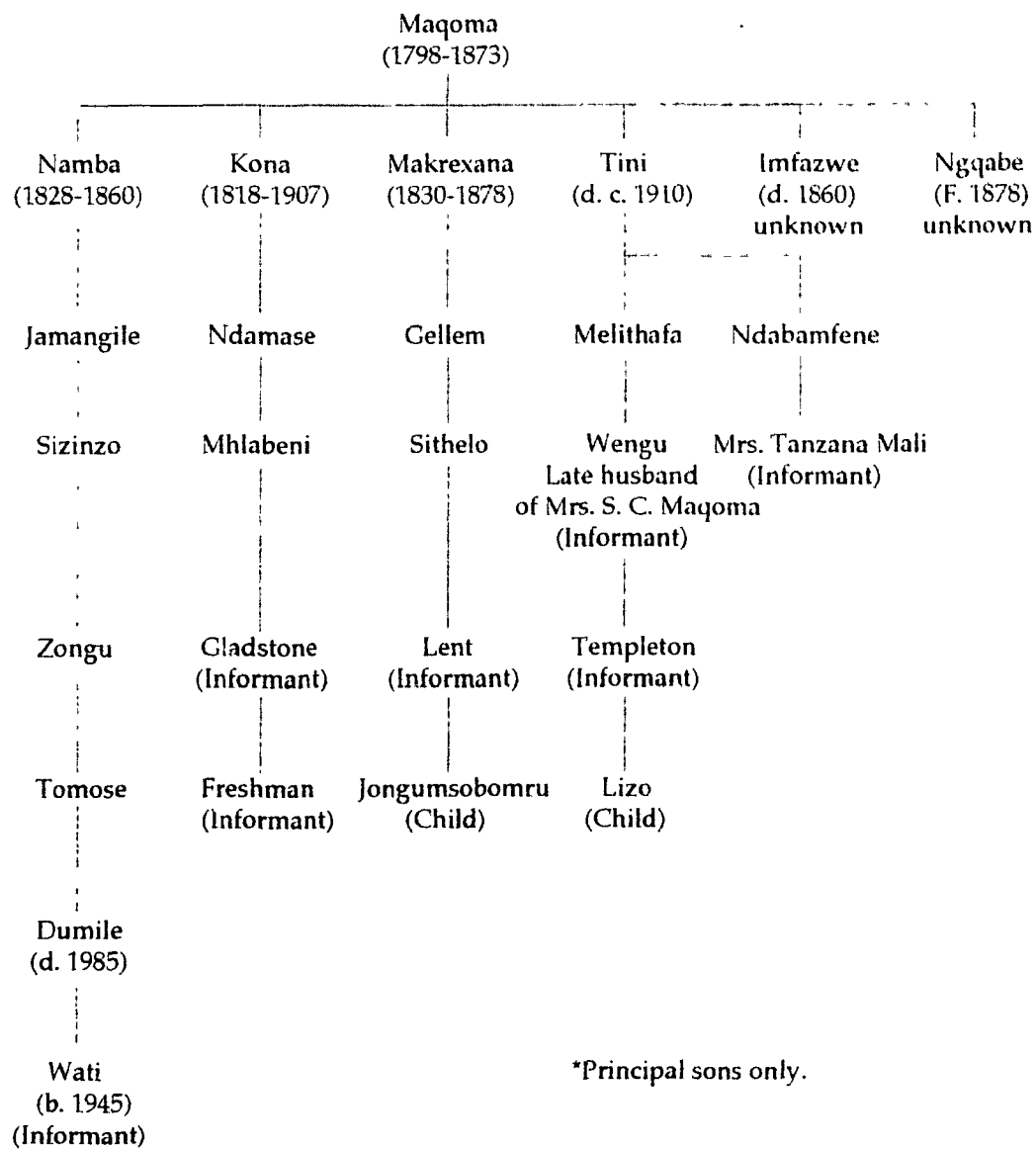


SEE TABLE II

Legend	
d.	died
b.	born
F	fought
c.	circa



Table II: The Progeny of Maqoma \*



## Chapter One

### "The Mirror of Nothonto"

#### Maqoma's Formative Years (1798-1819)

One night in 1978 Chief Lent Maqoma, a cabinet minister of South Africa's Ciskei tribal homeland, was woken by Mrs. Charity Sonandi, an elderly albino woman he had been employing as a diviner. "I have been given permission by the ancestors. Your great great grandfather would like you to come and get him", whispered the smiling old seer. "There is one more thing", she continued, "Maqoma is in bondage while he is still in the grave. He was killed! When you discover his bones it will rain". The chief, who had been educated in the western style, found it difficult to believe these predictions. A few weeks later the chief, accompanied by his councillors and the lame Mrs. Sonandi, took a ferry from Cape Town harbour to Robben Island. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this place had served as a notorious prison for all those who dared to challenge white supremacy in South Africa. The day was dark and windy. The sea was rough. Over a hundred years before, the cabinet minister's great great grandfather, the original Chief Maqoma, had spent his entire life resisting the intrusion of Europeans into Xhosa society. Eventually, he was imprisoned on Robben Island and died there in 1873. Landing on the bleak island, the party was driven to an isolated plot of unmarked graves. After performing ancient rituals, the diviner stood on one of the mounds and as it began to rain she cried, "This is the chief - take him home." The councillors began digging. Lent watched pensively. This was the culmination of a decade long search for the remains of his famous forefather. The shovels struck the pulpy and rotten wood of a coffin. Suddenly, the politician's praise-singer pulled a long femur from the earth and chanted the praises of Maqoma. Lent smiled with excitement. Another councillor uncovered rusty chains and manacles. Everyone gazed in amazement at the now exhausted Mrs. Sonandi. Had she been correct? The

answer came when a collar bone, which had been undoubtedly pierced by a bullet, was exhumed from the grave. If this was Maqoma, he had indeed been murdered. Laid on a fine white sheet, the bones were brought back to Ciskei in a South African warship and given a hero's funeral. Thousands of spectators attended. While Maqoma had died in exile over a century before, his memory is alive and well among both his descendants and countrymen.<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

In 1778 the Xhosa monarch, Gcaleka, died and was succeeded by his son Khawuti. Seeking power for himself, Rharhabe, brother of the dead paramount, attacked the young king. After being defeated Rharhabe's followers were driven northwest away from the mother chiefdom and across the Kei River. Within a few years they had absorbed many scattered Khoi and San communities and became the dominant force between the Kei and Fish rivers. Tragically, both Rharhabe and his Great Son, Mlawu, were killed in a battle with the rival Thembu chiefdoms to the north. Since Ngqika, Mlawu's heir, was far too young to take over as chief, Ndlambe, a paternal uncle, became regent. Under Ndlambe's rule the Rharhabe flourished and drove smaller Xhosa chiefdoms such as the Dange, Ntinde, and Gqunukhwebe west over the Fish where they fought Dutch settlers in the frontier wars of 1779-81 and 1793. However, when Ngqika entered manhood in 1795, Ndlambe refused to relinquish power. In the subsequent civil war Ngqika's loyal warriors expelled the traitorous regent and his subjects west across the Fish and defeated his trans-Keian Gcaleka allies. Centralizing his authority, the handsome and arrogant young king deposed influential councillors, absorbed entire homesteads into his Great Place, and imposed

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<sup>1</sup>Interviews with Mr. L. Fani, Tini's Location, Fort Beaufort, 15 October 1991; Mrs. S.C. Maqoma, Port Alfred Township, 18 October 1991; and Chief L.W. Maqoma, Bisho, 22 October 1991. Transcripts of all interviews are available in the Cory Library, Grahamstown. For documentary evidence see "Seer Finds Bones, Warship Wanted", The Cape Times 20 May 1978, and "Xhosa Hero's Remains Re-interred", Cape Argus 19 August 1978. Naturally, there is some scepticism about whether the bones were actually those of Maqoma.

cattle fines on commoners in order to increase the royal herds. Disgruntled people fled to Ndlambe.<sup>2</sup> The Rharhabe had been split. At this time the twenty year old Ngqika took his first wife, Nothonto. Originating from the common Ngqosini clan, she was the daughter of Nxiya and of both Sotho and Khoi ancestry. Around 1798, at a kraal called Egxukwane, near present day Middledrift, Nothonto gave birth to healthy twins, a boy and a girl. Proudly displaying his first son, Ngqika named him Maqoma. The girl became Nongwane and was prized for the bridewealth cattle she would eventually bring to the royal herd.<sup>3</sup> Rharhabe's lineage continued.

Living his initial years at the Great Place, Maqoma grew up at the height of his father's reign. The young prince would have no other full brothers. Although Ngqika married other women who produced more children, Maqoma remained his favourite. Despite Nothonto's low birth, the brash king planned ultimately to make Maqoma his heir and began educating him in the methods of Xhosa rulership. Cattle patronage was the key. As a child Maqoma learned that portions of the royal herds were lent out to Ngqika's subordinate chiefs on an increase-sharing basis. In turn, commoners cared for the animals and received their milk and blood. Ngqika kept his vassals in line by the ever-present threat of cattle repossession or fines. A commoner could "not reduce his herd by a single head" and only aristocrats were empowered to slaughter cattle.<sup>4</sup> As late as the 1850's William Holden, a British missionary, reported that:

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<sup>2</sup>The best pre-colonial history of the Rharhabe Xhosa is Peires, The House of Phalo, pp. 45-53.

<sup>3</sup>For Nothonto see Mqhayi, Ityala lamaWele, p. 91; and Walter B. Rubusana, Zemk'iinkomo Magwalandini (London, 1906), pp. 255-56. For the birthplace see Maqoma's own statement in "Gaika Chief Macomo in Prison", Cape Argus Christmas Supplement 30 December 1857. Mqhayi states that Maqoma and Nongwane were twins.

<sup>4</sup>Ludwig Alberti, Account of the Tribal Life and Customs of the Xhosa in 1807 (Cape Town, 1968), pp. 23 and 82. This was actually observed in 1806.

The retainers of a chief serve him for cattle; nor is it expected that he could maintain his influence, or indeed secure any number of followers, if unable to provide them with what at once constitutes their money, food, and clothing.<sup>5</sup>

While commoners relied on agriculture as their primary means of subsistence, the chiefs controlled the time of planting and received tribute from the harvest. During droughts class divisions would become aggravated as the aristocracy's cattle survived while the commoner's crops perished. Furthermore, the more extreme the conditions, the more the chiefs might pull back their cattle from the pyramid of commoner patrons.<sup>6</sup> However, the long history of rule by this aristocracy and its ability to maintain order without oppressing the population meant that it enjoyed a significant degree of popular legitimacy. A European traveller observed in 1806 that "the chiefs are held in high esteem and their commands are performed with meticulous care".<sup>7</sup> To Maqoma his father, Chief Ngqika, was an idyllic and God-like figure.

As a small boy the prince and his childhood friends spent endless days hunting birds and small animals with throwing sticks. With keen coordination, Maqoma mastered this pastime and after a successful hunt the boys would retire to a nearby stream to clean and roast their quarry.<sup>8</sup> After dark they would return to the Great Place to listen to the fireside tales of the old councillors. Shortly after 1805 Maqoma heard that Ndlambe, his hated great uncle, had defeated his father's warriors. This particular dispute had been sparked by Ngqika's theft of one of Ndlambe's

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<sup>5</sup>William C. Holden, The Past and Future of the Kaffir Races (Cape Town, 1866), p. 327.

<sup>6</sup>For accounts of chiefly cattle repossession during drought see (CL) MS 16,579, Journal of the Reverend James Laing 29 October and 7 November 1836.

<sup>7</sup>Alberti, Account of the Tribal Life, p. 82.

<sup>8</sup>Queenstown Free Press 9 February 1859 indicated that Maqoma hunted in this fashion during his banishment to Robben Island from 1858-69.

wives, the beautiful Thuthula.<sup>9</sup> Compounding Ngqika's difficulties was a cattle epizootic which weakened his system of pastoral patronage and caused some rebelliousness within the commoner population. However, the paramount avoided disaster by moving his herds away from the infected area.<sup>10</sup> Ngqika sought assistance from the Europeans of the Cape Colony. Several representatives of the Batavian Republic<sup>11</sup>, including Governor J.W. Janssens in 1803 and Ludwig Alberti in 1806, travelled to the chief's Great Place but did not notice the very young Maqoma.<sup>12</sup> Visiting Ngqika's kraal in 1809 a diplomat from the new British administration at the Cape, Colonel Richard Collins, described Maqoma, then about eleven years old, as "a noble specimen of a savage prince, capable of being moulded into a Christian hero".<sup>13</sup> Amazed by this strange guest, the boy developed an early and lasting interest in all aspects of European society. Since the whites were courting his father, the prince had an initially positive opinion of the Cape Colony. Physically resembling Nothonto, Maqoma became extremely close to his mother and often sought her advice. Ngqika was also dependent on his own mother's council and often brought her to meetings with colonial visitors. Maqoma was eventually dubbed "the mirror of Nothonto".<sup>14</sup> The future chief was raised in an atmosphere of internecine warfare and witnessed the expansion of his people's relations with Europeans.

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<sup>9</sup>Peires, The House of Phalo, pp. 58-61.

<sup>10</sup> Alberti, Account of the Tribal Life, p. 116.

<sup>11</sup>The Batavian Republic was the last Dutch administration of the Cape before the second British occupation in 1806.

<sup>12</sup>John Milton, The Edges of War: A History of Frontier Wars (Cape Town, 1983), pp. 54-57.

<sup>13</sup>Andries Stockenström, The Autobiography of Sir Andries Stockenström Vol I, (Cape Town, 1887), p. 44.

<sup>14</sup>Interview with Mr. J. Mncono, New Brighton Township, Port Elizabeth, 19 October 1991.

As custom dictated, Maqoma, upon entering his early teens, was sent north with his mother and some of her kinsmen to the royal cattle kraals in the Kat River valley.<sup>15</sup> Ngqika assigned his brother-in-law and witchhunter<sup>16</sup>, Kota, to be the prince's guardian.<sup>17</sup> Preparation for manhood began. Wandering throughout the wilderness, the adolescent prince and his friends tended Ngqika's cattle and spent hours practising with both assegai and knobkerrie. Although of small stature, Maqoma became a strong, skilled, and aggressive fighter. Royal blood and a charismatic personality ensured that he would become the natural leader of his peers. These boys developed strong loyalties. Hunting buck and other large game supplemented the group's diet of maize and milk, and provided them with warm animal skin karosses.<sup>18</sup> As a chief's son Maqoma took to wearing the hide of a leopard which he had killed himself. On extended expeditions the prince would venture up into the nearly impenetrable mountain forest of Mtontsi. This became his favourite haunt. Nongwane would often cheer her brother on at stick fights and as night approached the girls would sing as the boys danced vigorously around the fire. Maqoma became known as "the tall and hefty man of Nothonto".<sup>19</sup> This praise suggests that the impressive and popular prince continued to rely on the council of his mother. Additionally, it employs irony to indicate that while the future chief may have been small, his power and presence were great. In 1812,

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<sup>15</sup>See Maqoma's own statement in "Gaika Chief Macomo in Prison", Cape Argus 30 December 1857.

<sup>16</sup>In Xhosa society a witchhunter or iGqira used mystical rituals to accuse or "smell out" a person for practising sorcery. Death was the usual punishment. It must also be realized that witchcraft accusations were the chiefs' primary method of eliminating critics. Witchhunters - referred to by the colonials as witchdoctors - were almost always employed by political rulers.

<sup>17</sup>J.P. Fitzgerald, "The Witchdoctors of South Africa", King William's Town Gazette December 1857. Not much else is known about Kota. A photograph of him as an old man is housed in the South African Library, Cape Town.

<sup>18</sup>A kaross is a cloak made of animal hide.

<sup>19</sup>Maqoma's praises in Rubusana, Zemk'iinkomo, p. 257.

when Maqoma was about 14 years old, he heard rumours that those curious white people to the far west had used horses and firearms to drive Ndlambe's followers and his Gqunukhwebe allies east over the Fish.<sup>20</sup> Ndlambe was pushed closer to Ngqika and the old rivalry was rekindled. The prospect of renewed internecine conflict and the hatred for his treacherous great uncle made Maqoma even more interested in refining the martial skills which would eventually elevate him to fame. Would be warriors, like the prince and his friends, romanticised the prospect of proving themselves in combat against their arch-enemy, Ndlambe. Waking up in the very early morning, Maqoma would watch the sunrise and plan the coming days events.<sup>21</sup> This became a characteristic habit.

Around 1816 Maqoma and his peer group were called back to Ngqika's Great Place to undergo the circumcision ritual. By this time the paramount had produced many other sons and succession became a contentious issue among his councillors. Heka, Ngqika's concubine, had given birth to Tyali who was now entering adolescence and as next in age to Maqoma enjoyed the increasing favour of his father.<sup>22</sup> Xhoxho, a large six year old, had an highly attractive mother but suffered himself from a dull appearance and slow personality. On one occasion Ngqika pointed to him and said disdainfully:

Look at that thing! Does that look like a chief's son? My councillors advised me to marry his mother, saying that she was a fine-looking woman, and would bring me fine-looking children; but look at the thing she has

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<sup>20</sup>G.M. Theal, (ed.), Records of the Cape Colony Vol VII (London, 1897), p. 160, Craddock to Graham, no date. This refers to the expulsion of the Xhosa over the Fish in 1811-12.

<sup>21</sup>Interview with Mr. Mncono.

<sup>22</sup>For Heka and Tyali see W.D. Soga, "Imbali Ye Nkosikazi U Sutu", Isigidimi SamaXhosa, 1 December 1885.



brought me.<sup>23</sup>

Despite the king's low opinion of the unfortunate Xhoxho, Maqoma and he developed an intimate friendship.<sup>2</sup> Sharing the same mother, Matwa and Tente, who were both between six and eight, seemed to lack the potential of their oldest half-brother. Finally, Anta, about five years old, was yet to display his abilities. Returning home, Maqoma received a large bull with white patches from some senior members of the ancient and aristocratic Jwarha clan. This may have been symbolic of that clan's recognition of Ngqika's eldest son as his legitimate heir. Shouting "isiJingqiJingqi", Maqoma's age-mates described the almost psychedelic effect of the bull's colourful coat and named it Jingqi. The prince left this prestigious animal with one of his father's councillors, Mdabe, and led his friends away to circumcision school at a nearby place called Liblayi. After months of seclusion and ceremony they burned the grass circumcision hut and emerged as men. Presenting his son with the distinctive bull known as Jingqi, the proud Ngqika unofficially made Maqoma his heir apparent and awarded him the praise-name Jongumsobomvu (watching the sunrise). The prince's circumcision mates were so impressed that they swore to serve him always under the title amaJingqi. Maqoma and his followers entered service in Ngqika's army.<sup>25</sup> Childhood was over.

By 1817 the Gcaleka, under their new chief Hintsu, had regained strength and showed interest in re-establishing rule over the Rharhabe

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<sup>23</sup>Brownlee, Reminiscences, p. 302. This was said in the presence of Rev. John Brownlee, father of the Charles, who entered the area as a missionary in 1820.

<sup>24</sup>In the future Xhoxho would be described as Maqoma's favourite brother.

<sup>25</sup>While there is some confusion over who gave Jingqi to Maqoma, Rubusana, Zemk'iinkomo, p. 255 is the oldest (1906) and most reliable set of traditions. The interview with Mr. Mncono confirms Rubusana's account and gives the place of circumcision. See also the interviews with Chief L.W. Maqoma; Mr. J.W. Ngqabavu, Alice, 17 October 1991; and Mrs. T. Mali, Ntselamanzi Location, Alice District, 16 October 1991.

chiefdoms west of the Kei. A potential alliance between Ndlambe and Hintsa threatened Ngqika's already declining regional dominance. Ngqika sought allies.<sup>26</sup> Attempting to secure friendship with the large Thembu chiefdoms on his northern frontier, the paramount married Suthu, the daughter of one of these rulers. Since the Thembu royal lineage was the oldest in the area, Ngqika had no choice but to make Suthu his Great Wife. This meant that her first male child would become the chief's legitimate heir or Great Son.<sup>27</sup> Maqoma felt alienated but recognized the diplomatic necessity of such a marriage. As a consolation, Ngqika made his eldest prince head of the Right Hand House. Such a position ensured that Maqoma would be second in rank to any future Great Son and gave him the right eventually to form a semi-autonomous vassal chiefdom. Additionally, as Ngqika's Right Hand Wife, Nothonto's high position within the royal family was enshrined.<sup>28</sup> However, the Thembu were disunited and unreliable allies.

Whatever chief gained the favour of the powerful Cape Colony could exercise control over all the Xhosa groups between the Fish and Kei rivers. When the British governor, Lord Charles Somerset, requested a meeting with Ngqika, the paramount leapt at the opportunity. On the third of April 1817, while Ngqika and Maqoma were on a hunting trip in the Kat River Valley with 800 of their warriors, they welcomed the governor who arrived with 300 mounted gunmen and several artillery pieces. Somerset had his own agenda. Recognizing the importance of this meeting, the other local chiefs, Bhotomane of the Dange, Ngeno of the Mbalu, and even Ndlambe, travelled to the Kat River Conference. The British and Boer cavalry formed a three sided square in which the governor greeted Ngqika,

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<sup>26</sup>Statement by Mr. D. Runeyi, Shixini Location, Willowvale District, 25 November 1975, interview by J.B. Peires.

<sup>27</sup>W.D. Soga, "Imbali Ye Nkosikazi U Sutu".

<sup>28</sup>Interview with Chief L.W. Maqoma.

the other chiefs, and some 300 warriors. Backed by his personal bodyguard and loaded cannon, Somerset reclined in a chair while the leopard skin clad chiefs squatted on floor mats. Although the conversation was carried on through interpreters, the Europeans were impressed with Ngqika's graceful language and tone. Sitting immediately behind his father, Maqoma, whom the governor described as "a fine youth of about 19, of remarkably expressive countenance", listened to the negotiations. Ngqika expressed great desire that his people should be allowed to trade with the colony. Somerset agreed that the Xhosa would come to Grahamstown, the colonial frontier capital, twice a year for that purpose provided they obtained permission from Ngqika himself. Through this statement the governor recognized Ngqika as the senior Xhosa chief west of the Kei River. In return, the paramount conceded to a Spoor Law which permitted settlers to track stolen stock beyond the colonial Fish River boundary and seize animals from kraals suspected of harbouring thieves. While Maqoma advised his father against such an agreement, it was the only way to secure the assistance of European firearms against any future anti-Ngqika alliance of rival chiefs. Afraid for his own safety, Ndlambe could not oppose the decision. After the very satisfied Somerset dispensed presents to the chiefs, both parties retired.<sup>29</sup> Ngqika had forged an alliance. But at what cost?

Throughout the remainder of 1817 and the beginning of 1818, Ngqika placated the colony by sending scores of horses and cattle to Grahamstown. This prevented settler patrols from entering his domain and ensured the good will of the colonial government.<sup>30</sup> Two colonial agents, Agnatus Mulder and William Nell, visited Ngqika's kraal and demanded tribute. Escorted by the paramount's head witchhunter, Kota, these settlers were

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<sup>29</sup>For a complete account of the Kat River Conference see The Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser 19 April 1817.

<sup>30</sup>For example see The Cape Town Gazette 21 June 1817.

given several dozen cattle and returned to the colony with favourable reports.<sup>31</sup> Consequently, stock hungry whites descended upon other chiefdoms. Within a month of the Kat River Conference, one hundred British dragoons raided the kraal of the Dange chief, Habana. In the subsequent skirmish five Xhosa men were shot to death, many more wounded, and a large quantity of cattle taken to the colony.<sup>32</sup>

The colonial press portrayed Ndlambe as a "restless freebooter" who "encouraged those depredations which have proved so ruinous to our borderers".<sup>33</sup> In late 1817 a small Boer commando attempted to seize stock from some of the chief's villages but was repelled by an overwhelming number of warriors. Ndlambe refused colonial demands that he surrender 2000 head of cattle. To a chief dependent on pastoral patronage, that would have been almost suicidal. On the eighth of January 1818, Major George Fraser led an expedition of 300 British infantrymen and 150 mounted settlers across the Fish and into Ndlambe's territory. Marching for several days, the Europeans reached the Keiskamma River and met Ndlambe with 2000 warriors. Two days of stand-off did not persuade the chief to comply with the colonial ultimatum and Fraser decided to use brute force. When a detachment of horsemen began gathering nearby cattle, Ndlambe's men surrounded them and shouted threats. However, the formed British infantry fired a thunderous musket volley over the warriors' heads causing them to retreat in fear. Spears were obviously no match for such weapons. Fraser seized 2060 of Ndlambe's cattle, only 600 of which were identified as colonial stock, and upon returning to Grahamstown distributed them to

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<sup>31</sup>PP, C.538 of 1836, Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements), p. 589, Evidence of John Tzatzoe (sic). This is another one of the few references to the mysterious Kota.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 24 May 1817.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 14 February 1818.

eager white farmers.<sup>34</sup> This massive robbery had succeeded. Extortion had worked well. Ndlambe was enraged.

In the years immediately following his circumcision, Maqoma established his own kraal on the lower Kat River, near what is now the town of Fort Beaufort, where he lived with the other young men of amaJingqi.<sup>35</sup> Taking his initial wife at the age of nineteen, the prince produced his first child, a daughter subsequently named Taselo, around 1817. In less than a year the same partner had given birth to Maqoma's first son whose name, Kona which means "of this place", would commemorate the chief's first kraal.<sup>36</sup> At this point Suthu was not pregnant and Maqoma hoped that he might still succeed his father. Despite Ngqika's increasing reliance on colonial brandy and periodic childish temper tantrums, the king and his Right Hand Son remained on very favourable terms.<sup>37</sup> Receiving cattle from his father, Maqoma began building up a large private herd through the profits of increase-sharing. Commoners flocked to the now charismatic and potentially wealthy young aristocrat.<sup>38</sup> One of Ndlambe's headmen, Matshaya, defected with his followers and cattle

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>for the location of Maqoma see the statement of Charles Henry Matshaya as dictated to Rev. James Laing in The Glasgow Missionary Record 1842.

<sup>36</sup>For Taselo and Kona see Mqhayi, Ityala lamaWele, p. 103. In 1835 Charles L. Stretch estimated Kona's age to be 17. This places his birth in 1818. See B.A. le Cordeur, (ed.), The Journal of Charles Lennox Stretch (Grahamstown, 1988), p. 140. If Kona was born in 1818 Taselo, the oldest of Maqoma's children, must have been born in 1817 about a year after her father's circumcision. Unfortunately, the name of Taselo's and Kona's mother is not recorded in documents nor remembered in oral tradition.

<sup>37</sup>For Ngqika's behaviour see H. Lichtenstein, Travels in Southern Africa in the Years 1812-15 (Cape Town, 1930), p. 395. For Maqoma's relationship with his father see the interview with Chief L.W. Maqoma.

<sup>38</sup>Only ten years later, in 1828, a colonial patrol was able to seize 8000 cattle from Maqoma. To develop such a large herd he must have been stock raising since the time of his circumcision. See Chapter two for the raid.

to the embryonic Jingqi chiefdom. Within a few weeks of moving to the new location these people were growing maize.<sup>39</sup> Maqoma, now a stout and popular warrior, became a second father to Xhoxho, who had been rejected by Ngqika. Racing cattle, a traditional chiefly sport and display of wealth, became Maqoma's pleasure. On such occasions he would often ride the colourful Jingqi.<sup>40</sup> Everyone admired him. Nothonto and Nongwane resided at the prince's homestead.

Leaving his home among Ndlambe's people, Ntsikana, the first Xhosa convert to Christianity, moved to Ngqika's kraal and became an important councillor. He began instructing the paramount and his subjects in European religion but gained only a small following.<sup>41</sup> This cemented Ngqika's pro-colonial stance and a British missionary, Joseph Williams, moved into the neighbourhood and established a station near Maqoma's village. Although Nongwane and Matshaya displayed increasing interest in these strangers and their alien beliefs, no member of Maqoma's community was yet to convert to Christianity.<sup>42</sup> Conversely, Ndlambe accepted Nxele, a zealous anti-colonial prophet, as his primary adviser.<sup>43</sup> Within that chief's Great Place on the Buffalo River, a radical feeling of resentment developed towards both Ngqika and his aggressive European allies. Tension reached a climax. Retaliating against Ngqika for the Fraser commando,

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<sup>39</sup>Statement of Charles Henry Matshaya in The Glasgow Missionary Record 1842.

<sup>40</sup>Interview with Chief L.W. Maqoma.

<sup>41</sup>(CL) MS 9063, N. Falati, "The Story of Ntsikana", 1895.

<sup>42</sup>While A.Z. Ngani in Ibali LamaGqunukhwebe (Lovedale, 1937), p. 14 states that Nongwane interest in Christianity was stimulated by the visit of Reverend Van der Kemp to Ngqika's Great Place in 1800, this is unlikely because at the time she was only two years old. For Matshaya's early interest in Christianity see his statement in The Glasgow Missionary Record 1842. Since Williams was semi-literate, his letters are of little value as historical sources.

<sup>43</sup>For a thorough comparison of Ntsikana and Nxele see J.B. Peires, "Nxele, Ntsikana, and the Origins of Xhosa Religious Reaction", Journal of African History, 20, 1, 1979, pp. 51-61.

Ndlambe seized stock from one of his rival nephew's sub-chiefs.<sup>44</sup> While requesting military assistance from the colony, Ngqika, in October 1818, mobilized his entire army at his capital on the Tyume River.<sup>45</sup> Confident in his senior son and the warriors of amaJingqi, the king ignored Maqoma's lack of experience and placed him in command of the force which he then ordered to destroy Ndlambe's Great Place.<sup>46</sup> Well known for his dislike of battle<sup>47</sup>, Ngqika told his son, "My child, you go there and take the others". The paramount's most wise and trusted councillors accompanied the prince on his first campaign. However, before the army departed Ntsikana approached Ngqika with a clay pot full of water and said "chief, please do not fight with your brothers because if you do you will fall". Ntsikana then smashed the bowl on the ground and cried "this is what is going to happen if you go there and fight!" Dismissing the prophecies, Ngqika yelled "no, we have to go!"<sup>48</sup> The councillors, especially old Manxoyi, agreed with the chief. Persistently, Ntsikana approached Maqoma and said, "Beware! If the enemy seeks to draw you on, do not follow them, because you are being led into a dangerous trap". True to his praise-name, Jongumsobomvu<sup>49</sup> - the one who watches the sunrise - started the southward march well before dawn.<sup>50</sup> As Maqoma led his massed warriors, well over 2000 strong, out of the Great Place, Ntsikana shouted to them

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<sup>44</sup>Pringle, Narrative of a Residence, p. 278.

<sup>45</sup>For the location of Ngqika's Great Place see Soga, The South-Eastern Bantu, p. 164.

<sup>46</sup>Interview with Mr. W.M. Gqirhana, Msobomvu Location, Alice District, 16 October 1991.

<sup>47</sup>Richard Collins, "Journal of a Tour of the North-Eastern Boundary (1809)", in D. Moodie (ed.), The Record (Cape Town, 1960), p. 13.

<sup>48</sup>Interview with Chief L.W. Maqoma.

<sup>49</sup>By this time Maqoma was often referred to by the praise-name he had acquired at circumcision.

<sup>50</sup>Soga, The South-Eastern Bantu, p. 164.

that he saw their heads "devoured by ants".<sup>51</sup> The proud army marched on. They were confident of victory. Nothing could stop them.

Since it was at least two days by foot to Ndlambe's kraal on the Buffalo River, Maqoma's army camped for a night under the imposing shelter of the mountain called Ntaba ka Ndoda. Waking in the early morning twilight, Jongumsobomvu wondered anxiously about the approaching day. It would be his first taste of combat. How would he perform? As the sun broke the horizon, Maqoma ordered his men to prepare for battle. They marched in a single mass south down the mountain's foothills toward the open Debe Flats. Cresting the last hill, everyone saw several hundred warriors encamped on the plain beneath them. It was Ndlambe's force headed by his eldest son, Mdushane. Raising an assegai over his head, Maqoma yelled a command and sprinted forward leading his men in a mighty charge. They clashed with Ndlambe's warriors on the exposed ground scarred with the shallow depressions known as amaLinde. For a few moments it seemed as if Maqoma was driving the enemy back. Suddenly, the remainder of Ndlambe's army, mostly veterans, supplemented by warriors from the Gcaleka and Gqunukhwebe chiefdoms emerged from a nearby forest and rushed, many thousand strong, toward the fray. Hintsu himself led the charge. Maqoma's flanks were exposed. Within minutes the amaNgqika were completely surrounded by a numerically superior force.<sup>52</sup> Ndlambe and the Gcaleka monarch had concluded a secret alliance. Mdushane, a forty year old veteran of many conflicts, had conceived and executed the plan to ambush the over-confident young Maqoma. Attempting to break out of the trap, Jongumsobomvu led assault after desperate assault against the converging circle of enemy spears. His men were dying all around him. John Henderson Soga, a Xhosa historian and descendant of one of Ngqika's

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<sup>51</sup>John Knox Bokwe, Ntsikana (Lovedale, 1914),p. 20.

<sup>52</sup>Bokwe, Ntsikana,pp. 21-22.



councillors who fell in this battle, wrote an account of Maqoma's conduct at Amalinde:

It was here that Maqoma distinguished himself. Although it was the first engagement in which he had fought, he led his warriors right into the heart of the fighting enemy. But it was of no avail; the Gaikas were surrounded and Maqoma fell, only to rise again covered with wounds.<sup>53</sup>

The carnage lasted most of the day. One by one, Ngqika's councillors, Jotelo, Nteyi, Ntlukwana, and Qukwana were killed.<sup>54</sup> Finally, at sunset the remnants of the Ngqika's army managed to break through a gap in Mdushane's stranglehold and fled up the slopes of Ntaba ka Ndoda. While delaying the enemy's pursuit, Maqoma received a near mortal assegai wound. Members of amaJingqi, including Matshaya, carried their fallen leader away from the fighting. During the night Mdushane's warriors fuelled huge bonfires with the corpses of Maqoma's followers. In the crimson glow of firelight, those wounded unlucky enough to have been left behind during the retreat were impaled where they lay. It was an apocalyptic scene. Few villages in Ngqika's domain did not mourn some male relative slain at Amalinde.<sup>55</sup> Over 300 men in the prince's first command had been slaughtered. His sense of complete failure must have been overwhelming.

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<sup>53</sup>Soga, The South-Eastern Bantu, p. 165. The author's great grandfather was the councillor Jotelo.

<sup>54</sup> Brownlee, Reminiscences, p. 184 claims that these councillors were sent with the army as punishment for opposing Ngqika. However, the presence of all their sons in the subsequent council suggests that this is not true. After all, Ngqika sent his eldest son to lead the campaign. Surely he had not planned on the destruction of his own army. In addition, Brownlee does not state where he acquired this information. Mqhayi, Ityala lamaWele, p. 91 affirms that these councillors were sent with Maqoma because they were veteran warriors.

<sup>55</sup>Soga, The South-Eastern Bantu, pp. 163-166 gives the most detailed account of the battle. There are similar versions of Amalinde in Ben MacLennan, A Proper Degree of Terror (Johannesburg, 1986), p. 178 and Milton, The Edges of War, pp. 68-69. While MacLennan claims that Ngqika watched the battle from a distance, there is no evidence to confirm this. Amalinde is well remembered in Xhosa oral tradition which stresses that although Maqoma was "defeated he was not disgraced". See the interviews with Chief L.W. Maqoma, Mr. W.M. Gqirhana, Mr. J.W. Ngqabavu, and Mr. J. Mncono.

As the survivors headed north, Ndlambe's warriors burned Ngqika's kraals and seized 6000 of his cattle. The king was forced to seek refuge in the northerly Winterberg mountains.<sup>56</sup> Ntsikana's prophecy had been fulfilled.

Magoma had been so seriously injured at Amalinde that he dropped out of public life for the remainder of 1818 and most of 1819. Indeed, colonial officials thought that he had been captured and executed by Ndlambe.<sup>57</sup> Sending repeated and desperate messages to the colony, Ngqika pleaded for assistance. In November 1818 Major Fraser visited the paramount in his mountain hiding place and assured him of British support. Returning to Grahamstown, Fraser briefed his superiors and Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Brereton, military commander of the colony's eastern frontier, gathered all the regular soldiers and mounted burghers who were available. On the first day of December Brereton's force, with two artillery pieces, left Grahamstown and within two days met Ngqika and 6000 of his uprooted subjects on the Koonap River. The chief and his surviving warriors joined the column. On the fifth they crossed the Kat and began driving Ndlambe's people south. 6000 cattle were re-captured. By the seventh Brereton had crossed the Tyume and Keiskamma to enter the enemy heartland. Familiar with the destructive effect of firearms, Ndlambe concealed most of his followers in thick forests only to see them bombarded by colonial cannon. On the first day Brereton's raiders seized 10,000 head of cattle which they put in Ngqika's care. For several days the white soldiers destroyed kraals and burned fields. When the expedition headed back to the colony on the fifteenth, they had taken 23,000 head, 11,000 of which were presented to Ngqika. Within the colony the rest of the booty was sold to farmers in order to offset the expense

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<sup>56</sup>The Cape Town Gazette 2 January 1819.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

of Brereton's adventure.<sup>58</sup> Ngqika was restored.

Ndlambe counter-attacked. Recovering in his re-occupied kraal on the Kat, Maqoma heard that Ndlambe and his coastal Gqunukhwebe allies responded to Brereton's commando by launching a sweeping invasion of the colony. The Europeans were caught completely by surprise and many isolated farms were destroyed. Throughout the early months of 1819, British soldiers and Afrikaner settlers were besieged in Grahamstown and a few other small posts. Declaring martial law, Somerset dispatched Colonel Thomas Willshire with the 38th Regiment of Foot from Cape Town to the Eastern Frontier. In addition, Andries Stockenstrom, a local Landdrost<sup>59</sup> and well known historical character, was ordered to organize a large burgher militia.<sup>60</sup> However, before the British could mount any operations, Ndlambe's warriors appeared to withdraw. In reality, they were assembling for a massive attack on Grahamstown itself. On the twenty-second of April 1819 10,000 warriors, led by the prophet Nxele, shocked Willshire by a daylight assault on the frontier capital. After the initially confused defenders managed to rally behind stone walls and inside buildings, they brought murderous firepower to bear against the spear wielding enemy. Hundreds of Xhosa were killed. By sunset Ndlambe's army had retreated. Present at the battle was young Lieutenant Charles Lennox Stretch who would eventually become an important figure in Maqoma's life.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>A Landdrost was a district civil administrator. It was an old Dutch term retained by the British.

<sup>60</sup>The Cape Town Gazette 6 March 1819.

<sup>61</sup>See C.L. Stretch, "Makana and the Attack on Grahamstown", Cape Monthly Magazine Vol. 12, 1876, pp. 297-303. Makana was a settler name for Nxele. For another account of the battle see The Cape Town Gazette 15 May 1819.

In late July Willshire finally organized his forces and led three converging columns across the Fish and into Ndlambe's territory. Captain Henry Somerset, son of the governor and new to the frontier, participated in one of these patrols. Xhosa hit-and-run attacks by night and torrential winter rains hampered these colonial operations. Muskets were of little use in wet conditions and Ndlambe made good use of such opportunities.<sup>62</sup> Tragically, the Europeans seized so many cattle and burned so many fields that famine struck Ndlambe's subjects. In late August the chief sued for peace. Upon Nxele's surrender to Willshire in the same month, the Xhosa capitulation was accepted.<sup>63</sup> Exiled to Robben Island, Nxele eventually drowned while trying to escape.<sup>64</sup> Ndlambe's chieftdom lay in ruins. It would never fully recover. After the surrender Willshire took another 13,000 cattle into the colony.<sup>65</sup> Ngqika, who had stood aside from the conflict, was thoroughly satisfied. Amalinde had been avenged.

In mid-September 1819, Colonel Willshire met Ngqika, Nqeno, Bhotomane and Hintsa's brother Bhurhu on the banks of the Kei River. Since the colonial forces had just seized another 7000 cattle from Ndlambe's already defeated people, Hintsa's representative was concerned lest they would invade Gcaleka territory. Willshire declared that the colony recognized only two paramount chiefs in Xhosaland, Ngqika and Hintsa. Additionally, the colonel demanded that these rulers, in the future, send all stolen colonial cattle, horses, and firearms to Grahamstown. Abandoning the Gcaleka plans to re-establish control over the Rharhabe, Bhurhu agreed to Willshire's terms. Ngqika would dominate

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<sup>62</sup>The Cape Town Gazette 28 August and 11 September 1819.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 11 and 18 September 1819.

<sup>64</sup>For a brief but thorough account of this Fourth Frontier War see Peires, The House of Phalo, pp. 142-145.

<sup>65</sup>The Cape Town Gazette 16 October 1819.

all the chiefdoms west of the Kei.<sup>66</sup>

Recovered from his injury, Maqoma attracted many dispossessed refugees to his kraal. He received additional loan cattle from the thousands of head his father had been given by the white soldiers. These had been Ndlambe's stock. By the middle of October Maqoma was well enough to accompany Ngqika to meet Governor Somerset, who had recently arrived from Cape Town, at the Gwangqa River. In the British camp father and son enjoyed the company of their officer "friends". Laughing at the European's credulity for so easily reviving Ngqika's dominance, Maqoma danced, threw spears for sport, and drank brandy.<sup>67</sup> On the fifteenth of October, Somerset held a formal discussion with the chiefs. Kobe, the Gqunukhwebe ruler, and Habana apologized for their role in the invasion of the colony and claimed to have been coerced by Ndlambe. They then swore allegiance to Ngqika. Wisely, Ndlambe did not attend. Turning to Ngqika, the governor explained that the colonists would never be safe as long the Xhosa inhabited the Fish's eastern bank. In turn, Somerset then declared that the boundary of the colony would be advanced to the Keiskamma, Tyume, and Gaga rivers. All Xhosa on the west side of this line were to move east no later than the next full moon. Consequently, Ngqika's people were to withdraw from the fertile Kat River Valley. While no settlers would be permitted between the Fish and Keiskamma, a military post was to be established in the centre of this so called Neutral Zone. Despite Maqoma's strong opposition to this proposal, Ngqika had no option but to concede to Somerset's demands.<sup>68</sup> His entire paramountcy relied heavily on colonial support. The only request Ngqika presented was to have a

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 23 October 1819.

<sup>67</sup>Stretch, "Makana and the Attack on Grahamstown", p. 303.

<sup>68</sup>For Maqoma's opposition see Soga, The South-Eastern Bantu, p. 170.

missionary replace Reverend Williams who had died the previous year.<sup>69</sup> Maqoma was thunderstruck. Not only had the Kat River Valley been the prince's childhood home, it was also the location of his own kraal and potentially the site of a vassal chiefdom. How could his father allow these Europeans to force him off their best piece of land? Was this any way for an ally to behave? What were they really after? These questions haunted the already tormented Maqoma. If he had not been lured into Mdushane's trap at Amalinde this might have been avoided. It became clear that Ngqika was not such an idyllic figure and the whites were not to be trusted. Within a few weeks all the Xhosa had been expelled from the Neutral Zone and Ngqika moved his capital to the upper Keiskamma. Sullenly, Maqoma and his followers, including his mother, sisters, wife, and children, retired from the Kat and settled temporarily at the Great Place. Around the same time another blow struck the prince. Suthu became pregnant. Jongumsobomvu felt betrayed.

By the end of 1819 Maqoma was roughly twenty-two years old. Scarred from the wounds of Amalinde, the prince was a short but impressive warrior. Bright and intelligent eyes, an honest face, and developing oratorical skills enhanced his public appeal. However, the events of 1818 and 1819 fundamentally altered his attitudes. Once Maqoma had almost worshipped Ngqika. Now Jongumsobomvu began to see his father's deep flaws. Ngqika was a weak, cowardly, and sometimes childish drunkard. This was the harsh reality. By giving away half the chiefdom to the colony and taking a Great Wife who was probably about to produce an heir, Ngqika had doubly disillusioned his eldest son. While Maqoma's position as head of the Right Hand House entitled him to the privilege of forming a semi-autonomous community, the ceding of the Kat River to the colony virtually destroyed these ambitions. Where would Jongumsobomvu establish his fiefdom? As the dominant and oldest of Ngqika's sons, he could not

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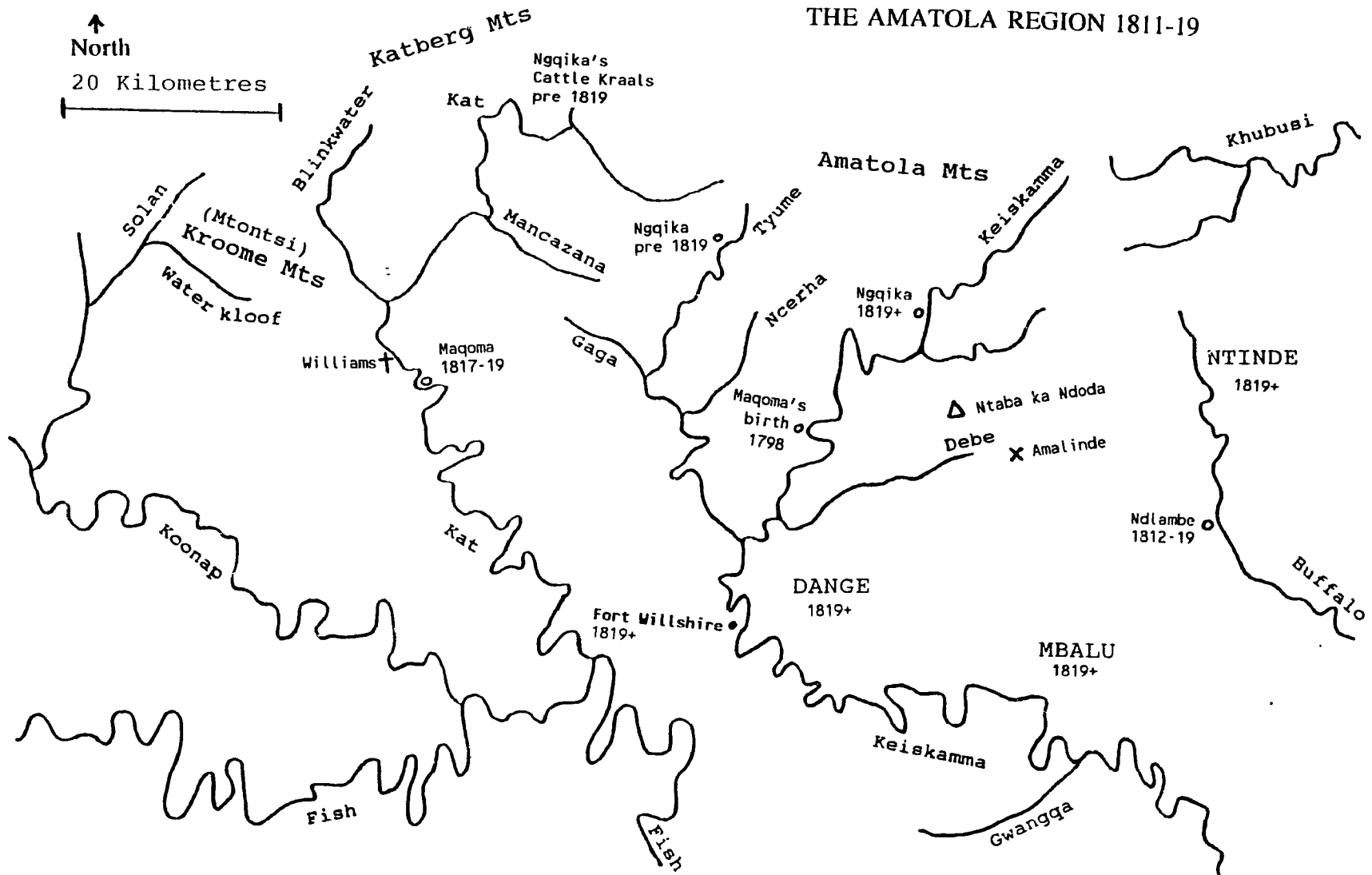
<sup>69</sup>The Cape Town Gazette 30 October 1819.

sit by and become subordinate to a potential heir over twenty years his junior. The Europeans also plagued Maqoma's thoughts. During childhood he had held them in high regard as his father's allies. Realizing that the colony was more than just another regional power, he saw them interfering directly in the chieftdom and using military supremacy to steal cattle and land. In war they not only fought their enemy's army but also destroyed the productive capacity of his society. This was new to the Xhosa. Maqoma knew that his traditional military system could never defeat them. If his people ever had to fight the colony they would need firearms, horses, and new tactics. These would take years to acquire and develop. Jongumsobomvu began to see missionaries not so much as interesting educators, but as possible representatives of the colonial presence. Perhaps they could be used to prevent European hostility. Clearly, the disaster at Amalinde, the collaboration of his father, and the treachery of the whites became the formative experiences of Maqoma's early adult life.





# THE AMATOLA REGION 1811-19



## Chapter Two

### "Leaning Against the Mountains of Mngwazi":

#### The Evolution, Extortion, and Eviction of Maqoma's Kat River Chiefdom (1820-29)

On the fifteenth of October 1991, an oppressively hot Ciskeian day, myself and a young Xhosa friend, Wonga Jonono, had spent hours driving along dusty rural roads searching for the village of Maqoma's Hoek. We were tired and discouraged. A few days before an informant had told us that a former chief, Wati Maqoma, lived around this area but was in hiding from the Ciskeian government. Turning a corner, we saw an old road sign pointing the direction to "Mackomer's Hoek". It had to be the place. Our spirits rose with excitement. Surrounded by the imposing Katberg Mountains, appeared a collection of dreary brown huts inhabited primarily by old people and children. Everyone stared with suspicion. A white man in a car usually meant trouble. Wonga approached two withered old women and explained that we wanted to meet Chief Wati Maqoma and hear the history of his famous great great grandfather, Jongumsobomvu. We were directed to the home of the oldest man in the village. While this grey-bearded gentleman invited us inside, his expression revealed nervousness and fear. He would not admit to the existence of any chief besides his current ruler and Ciskei's Minister of Manpower, Lent Maqoma. When we asked about the history of Jongumsobomvu the old man repeated "Whatever Lent says, whatever Lent says". Thanking our reluctant host, we drove out of Maqoma's Hoek more frustrated than before. A few minutes later we saw two young men in coveralls repairing a rusty car in front of their hut. We stopped to inquire. The men were cautious but friendly. After sharing some home-made beer with us, they admitted to having heard of a Wati Maqoma living under his wife's name near the a local tavern. However, they denied knowing him.

The next day we drove to a tavern near the small town of Balfour. Somewhere around this area Jongumsobomvu had established his first Great Place in the 1820's. Using the chief's alias, it was surprisingly easy to obtain directions to his residence. Within an hour we were parked in front of a rondaval and faced with several emaciated, growling dogs. A middle-aged Xhosa woman came out of the hut and demanded to know what we wanted. We asked to see her husband. Claiming ignorance as to whether or not he was at home, Mrs Maqoma went back into the one-room hut. We were abandoned outside with the starving dogs. Fifteen minutes later she returned and invited us in. Slouching in a worn armchair was a depressed looking man of about 45. In fluent English our host introduced himself as "Chief Wati Maqoma of the Jingqi tribe". After discovering that we were harmless historians and not government agents, the chief relaxed and consented to a tape recorded interview. However, the conversation always returned to how Lent Maqoma, a distant cousin, had used political power to usurp him as chief. Wati produced a typed petition by the "Jingqi Tribesman", dated 8 August 1986, which outlined his royal genealogy and recommended his re-appointment. The deposed chief claimed to be a direct descendant of Jongumsobomvu's Great Son, Namba. "Lent called my father an imbecile", said a bitter and resentful Wati. Striking the arm of his chair for emphasis, the ousted chief shouted "I am from Namba!" We were amazed. Suddenly, the door opened and two familiar men entered. They were our friends from the previous day. Looking slightly embarrassed, the car mechanics had walked more than ten kilometres to warn Wati that we were searching for him. He was still their chief.

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The 1820's marked the beginning of Maqoma's interaction with the powerful Cape Colony and his involvement in Xhosa politics. A great wave of British settlement on the Eastern Frontier in 1820 changed the nature of European aims in this part of South Africa. Previously, scattered Boer pastoralists were satisfied by periodic cattle raids against their Xhosa

rivals across the Fish River. Five thousand poverty stricken 1820 settlers now arrived on the frontier and were provided with firearms by the colonial government<sup>1</sup>. Immediately, they began demanding a cheap supply of labour to support their agricultural enterprises.<sup>2</sup> With experience as agriculturalists, Xhosa women and children were a tempting target. However, in 1807 London had banned the slave trade and Xhosa people were not interested in abandoning the familiar safety of traditional society for the uncertainty of alien rule. Additionally, Governor Somerset's border arrangements of 1819 forbade members of independent chiefdoms to enter the colony. Local white officials were besieged by labour-hungry British colonists.

East of the Keiskamma, Ngqika's subjects were settling into their new home after the previous year's expulsion. As expected, Suthu gave birth to a boy who, despite his club foot, was proclaimed as the King's Great Son. He was named Sandile.<sup>3</sup> Maqoma became increasingly disillusioned. Such a weak and sickly infant would never become a formidable warrior, let alone a competent chief. Distrusting Maqoma, Suthu complained to Ngqika about the Right Hand son's growing autonomy and popularity.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Jongumsobomvu's primary headman and fellow veteran of Amalinde, Matshaya, abandoned his cattle and followers to live at the new Tyume River mission of the Reverend John Brownlee. Taking the name Charles Henry, he learned English and became the leader of the few displaced Rharhabe who gravitated around this missionary.<sup>5</sup> The reason for

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<sup>1</sup>(CA) CO 122, Rogers to Willshire, 3 July 1820.

<sup>2</sup>Julian Cobbing, "Rethinking the Roots of Violence in Southern Africa, 1790-1840", Seminar Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, September 1991, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>W.D. Soga, "Imbali Ye Nkosikazi U-Sutu".

<sup>4</sup>Interview with Chief L.W. Maqoma.

<sup>5</sup>Statement of Charles Henry Matshaya, The Glasgow Missionary Record, 1842.

Matshaya's defection remains unclear. While he claimed genuine conversion to Christianity, he may have been involved in a dispute and escaped traditional restrictions or punishment by moving to the station. As Maqoma and his father became distant, Tyali entered manhood and overcame the extremely low status of his concubine mother to become Ngqika's prime adviser and confidant.<sup>6</sup> Seeking more land, Jongumsobomvu dispatched small parties of Jingqi warriors to scout the upper Kat River. Although this area lay in the northern reaches of the Neutral Zone, Maqoma's group was increasing too rapidly to remain near Ngqika's Great Place much longer. Overcrowding threatened to inhibit proper planting and cattle grazing. Immediate migration became a necessity.

Throughout the early 1820's, the colony developed an even more aggressive and violent policy toward its Rharhabe neighbours. Captain Richard Blakeman, commander of the newly constructed Fort Willshire, had been ordered to shoot any Xhosa who wandered into the Neutral Zone. Luring some of Ngqika's subjects across the boundary by promises of trade, British soldiers shot these unsuspecting people and confiscated the agricultural produce and stock they had planned to barter.<sup>7</sup> As early as February 1821, Andries Stockenstrom reported that small groups of Rharhabe were re-occupying the upper Kat River valley.<sup>8</sup> These formed the advance elements of Maqoma's migration. Since the British Army had reduced the number of soldiers on the eastern frontier after the expensive 1819 conflict, nothing was done to prevent the Xhosa from moving back into this northern part of the Neutral Zone.<sup>9</sup> Lacking good pasturage in his new area, Ngqika begged the colonial authorities to let him graze his herds

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<sup>6</sup>PP, C.538 of 1836, p. 603, Evidence of J. Read, Snr., 5 August 1836.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 143-45, Evidence of Captain Richard Blakeman.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 404, Evidence of Andries Stockenstrom.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 11, Evidence of Captain Robert Aitchison.

west of the Keiskamma but he was ignored.<sup>10</sup> In March 1821 Chief Bhotomane of the Dange surrendered one of Ngqika's warriors to the British. Allegedly, this man had crossed the Neutral Zone where he murdered a white herdsboy and stole forty-eight cattle. Lieutenant Colonel Maurice Scott, Commandant of the Frontier, took the prisoner with a cavalry escort to the Tyume mission where they met Ngqika and Maqoma. It was a dark and drizzly day. The prince's presence indicated that the accused man was probably a member of the Jingqi. In a callous tone the British commander ordered Ngqika to hang the prisoner on the spot. Refusing this demand, the paramount claimed that the man "had never done him or any of his people injury, and he did not see why he should execute him". Angrily, Scott ordered his troopers to "stand to their arms". When Ngqika saw the British soldiers removing the canvas rain covers from their firearms he turned to the colonial interpreter and nervously asked "what is he going to do? Tell him I will order the man to be executed immediately". Within minutes the chief's warriors dragged their condemned countryman to the riverbank and strangled him with a cord.<sup>11</sup> Scott smiled with sadistic pleasure. Maqoma could not believe that his father would concede to these extortionists. He thought Ngqika a coward. In August of the same year Captain Blakeman led 200 soldiers beyond the Keiskamma to ambush two of Ngqika's kraals. While official correspondence concerning this episode only mentions the seizure of cattle as punishment for alleged stock theft from settlers<sup>12</sup>, Thomas Pringle, a British humanitarian, made an interesting observation. Around the same time as the raid Xhosa prisoners, supposedly caught trying to infiltrate the Neutral Zone, were

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 146, Evidence of Captain Blakeman.

<sup>11</sup>PP, C.50 of 1835, Papers Relative to the Condition and Treatment of the Native Inhabitants of Southern Africa Within the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope or Beyond the Frontier of that Colony, p. 201, M. Scott to Commissioners of Inquiry, 25 January 1825.

<sup>12</sup>PP, C.538 of 1836, p. 144, Evidence of Blakeman.

working on the British docks at Algoa Bay.<sup>13</sup> It seems possible that Blakeman's commando, and other smaller unrecorded expeditions, were capturing Xhosa women and children to serve as forced labour for the 1820 settlers. Retaliation for stock theft and other so-called "depredations" became the accepted alibi for the illegal colonial seizure of Rharhabe cattle and labour. It became obvious to Magoma that the main body of his embryonic chiefdom would have to escape the vortex of colonial violence, namely Fort Willshire and Grahamstown, by moving quickly to the upper Kat. By the end of 1821 Jongumsobomvu and his Jingqi followers had left Ngqika's Great Place on the Keiskamma. Fearing white terrorism, many Rharhabe joined this march.

While Magoma was organizing his new kraals on the upper Kat, the colonial government sent the Reverend William Thomson to Brownlee's Tyume station. This new missionary was to act as a diplomatic agent to the Rharhabe. Logically, Ngqika and the other chiefs saw Thomson as a spy. They could not have been more correct. Visiting Magoma's new location, a Xhosa man who lived at the Tyume institution, perhaps Charles Henry Matshaya, noticed two colonial horses and took them back to Thomson. Jongumsobomvu was infuriated. This outcast had not only stolen his property but also threatened to invoke the wrath of the British army. The spies had to be punished. Early in 1822 Magoma led a retaliatory raid against the Tyume mission and carried off 275 cattle. Some of this stock belonged to the missionaries themselves. Thomson protested to Ngqika but the recalcitrant Magoma returned only 157 animals. Plotting to usurp his father's authority, the prince had launched the assault to sour relations between Ngqika and his former European allies. The plan was successful. One night in March 1822 Captain Robert Aitchison, with a strong patrol of Khoi Cape Mounted Riflemen, attacked Ngqika's Great Place. In the

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<sup>13</sup>Thomas Pringle, African Sketches, (Cape Town, 1834), p 133.

darkness and confusion the king was able to escape disguised as a woman.<sup>14</sup> Although the raid failed to seize Ngqika, other Rharhabe were captured. Shortly after the incident Thomas Stubbs, an 1820 settler, observed large numbers of Xhosa women working on white farms. These labourers had been supposedly arrested while collecting red clay near Grahamstown.<sup>15</sup> However, it is unlikely that they would risk a 40 kilometre walk through the hostile Neutral Zone and colony to gather common cosmetic material. After the attempt on his life, Ngqika began to distrust Thomson further and threatened some of the outcast Rharhabe who lived at the station. With the sharp increase in colonial aggression, Ndlambe sent peace overtures to his nephew and long-time enemy, Ngqika.<sup>16</sup> Throughout May the paramount made an extended visit to his defeated uncle and Thomson feared that they were planning to unite against the colony.

With no colonial interference Maqoma continued to re-occupy the Kat.<sup>17</sup> Locating his first Great Place, subsequently named Ngcwenxa which is the Xhosa name for the Kat River, at the base of the Mnqwazi (or Katberg) mountains, the new autonomous ruler ensured that enemies could only approach him from the south. The praise-singers claimed proudly that their young chief was "leaning against the mountains of Mnqwazi".<sup>18</sup> Quickly, the Jingqi absorbed scattered groups of Gonaqua Khoi who inhabited this vast valley. Furthermore, other Khoi who had lived at the former mission of the late Reverend Williams, which had been near Maqoma's old kraal on the lower Kat, joined the growing chiefdom. Both categories

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<sup>14</sup>PP, C.50 of 1835, p. 198, Extracts From the Report of Commissioners of Inquiry, 25 May 1825. See also Meintjes, Sandile, pp. 68-69.

<sup>15</sup>J. Cock, Maids and Madams: A Study in the Politics of Exploitation (1980), p. 199.

<sup>16</sup>(CA) CO 165, Thomson to Scott, 26 March 1822.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., Thomson to Scott, 22 May 1822.

<sup>18</sup>For Ngcwenxa see S.E. K. Mqhayi, Ityala lamaWele (Lovedale, 1931), p. 93. For the praise see the interview with Mr. Mncono.



of Khoi immigrants brought cattle with them.<sup>19</sup> Jongumsobomvu's maternal Khoi ancestry made him even more attractive to these wandering people. At the end of May, Ngqika attempted to regain supremacy over Maqoma by requesting that the colony give him back the Kat River valley. Predictably, he was refused.<sup>20</sup> In the first week of June, Thomson observed that while the colonial raid on Ngqika's capital had made Maqoma's people unwilling to steal from the settlers, there was a possibility that the volatile young prince might retaliate. Thomson claimed that Jongumsobomvu was a:

very active enterprising young man, and has a considerable body of Kaffirs attached to him of a similar description who will therefore be likely to give the colony a good deal of trouble unless they are properly managed. I know not however if the seizure of his person would prevent the anticipated war-it would I am afraid in the first instance at least incite his companions to acts of revenge from which (being all young men) they are not likely to be deterred.<sup>21</sup>

Maqoma's growing power made his father afraid of him. Tyali, a young man who combined a "cunning" personality "with a look of the utmost simplicity", lived with Ngqika and was expected to act as regent if the paramount died before Sandile's coming of age.<sup>22</sup> Maqoma was ostracised. Despite his new friendliness with Ndlambe, Ngqika assured Thomson that they were not planning to conspire against the colony and apologized for Maqoma's attack on the station.<sup>23</sup> Fearing a redirection of colonial violence toward his new chiefdom, Jongumsobomvu, in July 1822, assured Scott that he was attempting to apprehend cattle thieves and begged the

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<sup>19</sup>Tony Kirk, "Progress and Decline in the Kat River Settlement 1829-54", Journal of African History, XIV, 3, 1973, p. 412.

<sup>20</sup>(CL) MS 17,035, George Cory Notebook, Vol. I, C. Bird to Thomson, 16 June 1822.

<sup>21</sup>(CA) CO 165, Thomson to Scott, 10 June 1822.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>(CA) CO 165, Thomson to Scott, 23 June 1822.

commandant not to launch any patrols. Simultaneously, the nervous Ngqika moved his Great Place to a secret location and would only communicate with Europeans through Tyali.<sup>24</sup> Hoping that the colony would hold Ngqika responsible for all stock theft from the settlers, Bhotomane and Ngeno enjoyed the profits of this activity. Not surprisingly, Scott and Thomson demanded that Ngqika return all colonial cattle in Xhosaland. Powerless to influence neighbouring independent chiefs but recognized by the whites as the regional paramount, he bore the brunt of British bullying.<sup>25</sup> In early August the Reverend William Shaw, a travelling Wesleyan missionary, arrived at Maqoma's kraal in search of the paramount chief. Seeing this visitor as a political representative of the colony, Jongumsobomvu directed him immediately to Ngqika's Great Place. The prince thought this might focus colonial violence on his father's chiefdom. However, Ngqika impressed Shaw and the missionary continued south to establish a station among the Ggunukhwebe. Shaw did not become involved in the dispute.<sup>26</sup> Throughout the last four months of 1822, Ngqika tried desperately to re-establish hegemony over the Jingqi. Dissatisfied kraal heads who were hiving off to join Maqoma were smelled out by the King's witchhunters - one of whom was Kota, Maqoma's childhood guardian - and burned to death while their cattle were absorbed into the royal herd. Jongumsobomvu and Ngqika were completely alienated from one another. Avoiding civil war with his father, Maqoma moved his cattle west toward the colony and sent word to Thomson that Ngqika was harbouring a Cape Mounted Rifles deserter.<sup>27</sup> Clearly, the prince benefitted from the European sponsored destabilization of his father's chiefdom.

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., Thomson to Scott, 28 July 1822.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., Thomson to Scott, 31 August and 4 November 1822.

<sup>26</sup>Wesleyan Missionary Notices, March 1823, No. 87, p. 36.

<sup>27</sup>(CA) CO 165, Thomson to Scott, 29 November and 7 December 1822.

With a severe drought beginning in 1822, Maqoma's subjects supplemented the reduced milk production of their herds by stealing cattle from the Afrikaner settlers on the Baviaans River. By the end of that year the colonists had claimed the loss of 2,591 head to Xhosa depredations.<sup>28</sup> This was a dramatic increase. While these reports were probably exaggerated to encourage counter-raids, the Rharhabe, like the settlers, usually stole stock during arid periods.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, at the beginning of 1823 a military post, named Fort Beaufort, was established on the lower Kat "to watch Macomo, whose tribe was the most active, consisting as it did of all the young men detached from his father Gaika's kraal".<sup>30</sup> However, with a small garrison it had little effect on the situation. The settlers continued to demand that the British administration retaliate against the Rharhabe and re-capture their allegedly stolen stock.

In the first week of January 1823 Scott called all the Xhosa chiefs on the colonial frontier to a meeting at the Tyume station. Relations between Maqoma and Ngqika appeared so hostile that neither would risk contact with the other by attending the conference. The paramount also seemed afraid of another British attempt on his life. Jongumsobomvu watched from a distant hill as the hated Scott and Thomson met Bhotomane, actually one of the worst cattle thieves, and Phato, new chief of the coastal Gqunukhwebe. Without the major rulers little was accomplished and as the frustrated commandant rode away, Maqoma came down from his hiding place and infuriated Thomson by asking if Scott had left any presents.<sup>31</sup> While the prince's followers continued to rustle cattle from the Baviaans

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<sup>28</sup>PP, C.538 of 1836, p. 404, Evidence of Colonel Thomas Wade.

<sup>29</sup>Webster, "Land Expropriation", p. 37.

<sup>30</sup>Theal, Records of the Cape Colony Vol. 18, p. 38, Scott to commissioners of Inquiry, 29 June 1824.

<sup>31</sup>(CA) CO 186, Thomson to Scott, 5 January 1823.

settlement, Thomson told him such conduct would be considered "as an express declaration of war against the colony and" Colonel Scott would "march a very strong force into the country and treat them all as enemies".<sup>32</sup> Observing the reduction of British soldiers on the frontier, Maqoma scoffed at the missionary's warning. In late January Jongumsobomvu and a great number of his warriors visited the Tyume mission to hear a chastising letter from Scott. With no force to support the commandant's message, the prince placated Thomson by feigning obedience but did nothing to actually check the theft.<sup>33</sup> Throughout February and March, Maqoma continued to sanction small scale raids against the Baviaans settlers. Scott and Thomson tried to arrange a meeting with Ngqika to force him to impose more authority over the troublesome Jingqi. However, the paramount, fearful of the British and powerless to influence Maqoma, found several excuses to delay the conference. Finally, in April 1823 a trembling Ngqika, surrounded by most of his warriors, met Colonel Scott near the Tyume station. The king had little choice but to assure the commandant that he would prevent further depredations and he agreed to send ivory to a proposed trade fair. Interestingly, Scott thought that Maqoma and his Jingqi warriors were observing the conversation from a concealed position.<sup>34</sup>

In June 1823 Field Cornet Cornelius Van der Nest, an official of the Baviaans Boers, reported that Maqoma's 16,000 subjects on the Kat had become a threat to white settlement.<sup>35</sup> Under the duress of a possible colonial raid, Ngqika had to convince his eldest son to stop provoking the settlers. From the first week of June to early July, the king reconciled

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., Thomson to Scott, 23 January 1823.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., Thomson to Scott, 27 January 1823.

<sup>34</sup>Theal, Records, pp. 39-40, Scott to Commissioners, 29 June 1824.

<sup>35</sup>(CL) MS 17,035, Sir George Cory Notebook, Vol. I, Harding to A. Stockenstrom, ? June 1823.

with Jongumsobomvu by attending his lavish wedding feast on the upper Kat.<sup>36</sup> Ngqika recognized Maqoma's autonomy in exchange for his prevention of any Jingqi stock theft from the colony. Father and son were at peace. Despite the drought, the prince enforced the agreement and over the next six months Rharhabe depredations ceased.<sup>37</sup> The Baviaans River settlers were angered when only a few dozen cattle, surrendered by Ngqika to pacify the colony, were given to them. Scott was becoming weak. The colonists wanted more. The "Kaffirs" would pay!

In early September 1823 Field Cornet Van der Nest took matters into his own hands. Lacking military authorization, he led forty-five mounted settler gunmen on a raid against one of Maqoma's kraals. Initially surprising the Jingqi, the commando seized sixty-three cattle and began riding back to the colony. However, the local headmen rallied their warriors and pursued the Boers. Since the cattle were moving slowly and overwhelming numbers of Xhosa were not far behind, Van der Nest abandoned the stock and raced back to the Baviaans. When Scott demanded an explanation for the patrol, the embarrassed Field Cornet claimed that Maqoma's people had stolen his cattle and also those of two other farmers. He added that they had abandoned the animals because it seemed as if the Xhosa were going to plunder their unprotected homes.<sup>38</sup> The enraged Maqoma instructed his people to renew their harassment of the Baviaans settlement.<sup>39</sup> The conflict continued.

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<sup>36</sup>(CA) CO 186, Thomson to Scott, 7 June and 14 July 1823.

<sup>37</sup>Theal, Records, p. 40, Scott to Commissioners, 29 June 1824.

<sup>38</sup>PP, C.538 of 1836, p. 405, Stockenstrom to Deputy Landdrost of Craddock, 14 September 1823; Theal, Records, p. 41, Scott to Commissioners, 29 June 1824; and (CA) CO 2641, C. Van der Nest - W. Harding, 7 September 1823. Van der Nest's reports of the stock stolen from the settlers are all dated after his attack. This suggests that it was a fabrication.

<sup>39</sup>Theal, Records, p. 41, Scott to Commissioners, 29 June 1824.

In October 1823 the newly promoted Major Henry Somerset, a senior officer of the Cape Mounted Rifles and son of the governor, replaced the tired and ineffectual Scott as Commandant of the Eastern Frontier.<sup>40</sup> A new era of violence began. Previously, Somerset had developed close personal relationships with many influential settlers. By the end of November he had mobilized 100 Cape Mounted Riflemen and 200 burgher horsemen at Fort Beaufort. On the evening of the fourth of December the expedition left the post and rode north up the Kat. Detouring to cross the perilous Katberg range, Somerset's troopers descended on Maqoma's Great Place at dawn the next day. As the young chief emerged from his hut in the early light of morning, he saw Khoi and Boer cavalry gallop into the unsuspecting community. He had not thought it possible for an enemy to cross those mountains. All the sentries were stationed toward the open south. Warriors were shot while grasping for their spears. Fleeing for their lives, women and children were cut down and trampled to death. Everything became chaotic. Resistance seemed futile. Satisfied with the slaughter, Somerset directed his men to burn the kraal and seize all Maqoma's cattle. As the sun rose, Jongumsobomvu watched 7000 cattle, his entire royal herd, being driven south down the Kat River. Reaching Fort Beaufort, Somerset distributed 1,776 head to anxious settlers. A few days later, on the seventh, the Major met Maqoma at the Tyume mission. Promising to curtail further theft from the colonists, the prince received back 5,224 of his animals. Somerset was intelligent enough to realize that seizing the chief's entire herd would force him into war with the colony.<sup>41</sup> As a result, the remaining stock was used as a lever to extort

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<sup>40</sup>Rivett-Carnac, Hawk's Eye, p. 42. This book is a pro-settler, romantic biography of Henry Somerset.

<sup>41</sup>For the attack on Maqoma's kraal see The Cape Town Gazette and Government Advertiser, 20 December 1823; Theal, Records Vol 16, pp. 462-463, C. Somerset to Earl Bathurst, 18 December 1823, and H. Rivers to Colonel Bird, 9 December 1823; and PP, C.538 of 1836, p. 407, Evidence of Colonel Thomas Wade. For the killing of women and children see C.W. Hutton, (ed.), The Autobiography of the Late Sir Andries Stockenström Vol I, p. 237. While there is no evidence to suggest that Somerset took

a pledge of obedience. The commandant thought it would be better to make periodic raids into Xhosaland whenever cattle or labour were required. Claiming the commando as a great and glorious military victory, Somerset received the blessing of the governor, his father, and became the hero of the settler population. The colonists, both Afrikaner and English, were confident that this commandant would fulfil their desire for slaves and stock. Once again, Maqoma became fearful of the colony's military might.

Throughout 1824 Maqoma and his subjects rebuilt their ravaged chiefdom. Huts were reconstructed, fields replanted, and cattle-breeding renewed. The loss of nearly 2000 head meant that Jongumsobomvu had less patronage to dispense. Consequently, he attracted fewer new followers. Within the young chief's family, Nongwane, his sister, had married a junior Gqunukhwebe chief, Kama, and moved south. Eventually, Nongwane's old interest in Christianity was rekindled by the Reverend Shaw and both she and Kama converted to the European faith.<sup>42</sup> Despite having been the victim of several colonial attacks, Maqoma never disapproved of his sister's new religion and developed a friendship with Kama. Fearing the obvious military superiority of Somerset's forces, Jongumsobomvu attempted to placate white hostility. While he could not afford another colonial raid on his chiefdom, an eastward movement away from the colony meant abandoning fertile and well watered land and risking re-absorption into Ngqika's kingdom. Earlier in the year Field Cornet Van der Nest had visited Maqoma's Great Place and demanded insidiously that a regular tribute of cattle be brought directly to his farm. On several occasions Jongumsobomvu dispatched small numbers of cattle to the Baviaans

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captives back to the colony, given previous colonial labour raids and the commandant's future participation in similar events (for example Mbolombo) it may not be unreasonable to suspect that some of Maqoma's subjects were brought back to Fort Beaufort as forced labour.

<sup>42</sup>Drusilla Siziwe Yekela, "The Life and Times of Kama Chungwa (1778-1875)", MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1988, pp. 69-70.

settlement. In early November the Cape Mounted Rifles seized 411 head from Maqoma's fear stricken kraals and delivered the stock to a satisfied Van der Nest.<sup>43</sup> One evening in mid-November, three Jingqi warriors brought two oxen and an escaped mixed-race slave woman to Van der Nest's residence. When the Field Cornet attempted to capture these men, they fled into the darkness. Pursuing on horseback, Van der Nest and his white henchmen shot one of the Jingqi men to death and wounded another. Luckily, the remaining warrior managed to return safely to Maqoma's kraal. A few days later the injured man, who had hidden in the bush, staggered into the Great Place. Furious, Jongumsobomvu sent messages of complaint to Thomson. Van der Nest claimed that the slave woman had told him that the warriors had stolen settler cattle. Somerset investigated the incident. However, despite eye-witness accounts that the Field Cornet had been the aggressor, he was not prosecuted.<sup>44</sup> Xhosa life meant nothing.

Ngqika re-established his alliance with the Cape Colony. Regular trade fairs were held at Fort Willshire throughout 1825 and 1826. In exchange for thousands of pounds of ivory and cattle hides, the Xhosa received millions of European glass beads. Attending these gatherings, Ngqika drank colonial brandy, danced to amuse the white soldiers, and coerced tribute from every Xhosa trader.<sup>45</sup>

Colonial patrols continued to extort cattle from Maqoma's kraals.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Theal, Records, Vol. 24, p. 142, Somerset to Secretary to Government, 20 December 1825.

<sup>44</sup>PP, C.50 of 1835, pp. 181-83, Somerset to Commissioners of Inquiry, 4 October 1825; Thomson to John Thomas Biggs, 8 October 1825; Somerset to Commissioners of Inquiry, 16 October 1825; and George Rennie to Commissioners of Inquiry, 20 October 1825.

<sup>45</sup>For reports on the fairs see (CA) CO 233/4, Somerset to Secretary to Government, October - December 1825.

<sup>46</sup>Theal, Records, Vol. 24, p. 143, Return of Horses and Cattle Captured.



While the Baviaans settlers received the loot from these expeditions, Jongumsobomvu refused to invoke the full wrath of the colony by retaliating. In early October 1825 Henry Somerset, now a lieutenant-colonel, visited Maqoma's Great Place with an armed escort. The chief was informed that the shooting of his men by Field Cornet Van der Nest the previous year was not a colonial responsibility as those warriors were probably thieves. Since these men had brought two oxen to Van der Nest, the absurdity of this statement was obvious.<sup>47</sup> Maqoma may have been planning revenge as later in the month several parties of Jingqi warriors were caught "lurking around the neighbourhood of Field Cornet Van der Nest's" farm. Returning these men to Ngcwenxa, Somerset reminded Jongumsobomvu about the colonial boundary and that his continued presence in the Neutral Zone was contingent on "good behavior".<sup>48</sup> Settler hostility toward Maqoma increased. British colonists around Grahamstown complained that they had not received a share of the Jingqi cattle taken in late 1823.<sup>49</sup> Instead of risking conflict with the frustrated Maqoma, Somerset satisfied white demands by raiding a headman of Susa, Ngqika's rebellious sister. With the paramount's permission, a colonial force, in December 1825, rode into headman Nouka's kraal "shooting the women and children" and "wantonly firing upon the fugitives".<sup>50</sup> Sold out by their king, these Rharhabe chose to die rather than be taken into the colony as virtual slaves. The expedition returned to Fort Willshire with several hundred captured cattle.<sup>51</sup> Once again, Ngqika was using colonial support to secure local hegemony.

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<sup>47</sup>(CA) CO 233/4, Somerset to Commissioners of Inquiry, 4 October 1825.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., Somerset to Commissioners of Inquiry, 24 October 1825.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., Somerset to Secretary to Government, 20 December 1825.

<sup>50</sup>PP, C.538 of 1836, p. 408, Statement of T. Pringle as told by Colonel T.F. Wade, 25 April 1836.

<sup>51</sup>(CA) CO 233/4, Somerset to Secretary to Government, 26 December 1825.

Maqoma realized that the only way to defend his chiefdom from both the Europeans and Ngqika was the acquisition of horses and firearms and the development of new tactics. Beginning in late 1825, Jongumsobomvu instructed his warriors to steal horses from settler farms and acquire muskets from covert white traders. Based on his experience at Amalinde, the young chief formulated rudimentary ambush tactics. In January 1826 a Koonap River settler named Greef reported the theft of over thirty of his horses. Subsequently, a small colonial patrol tracked the stolen animals to Maqoma's territory. Lieutenant W.H. Rogers and the infamous Field Cornet Van der Nest led twenty Khoi mounted riflemen and forty burghers toward the Kat River. Under cover of darkness, the expedition approached a Jingqi kraal. Upon the breaking of day, Rogers and Van der Nest charged into the shocked village and seized 370 cattle. As the patrol withdrew toward the colony, the local headmen rapidly organized 150 warriors. Positioning themselves behind a hill which they knew the patrol would have to cross, the Jingqi men concealed themselves in the bush and formed an extended line some four or five warriors deep. When the advance guard of the mounted column passed over the knoll, the warriors rushed forward in ambush. Shaken by this new tactic, the colonials fought a running battle with the Jingqi until the arrival of another patrol forced the warriors to withdraw. Rogers was amazed by the "considerable boldness" of his opponents and observed one warrior with a musket. However, the superior firepower of the patrol and the fact that only the advance guard had been ambushed, enabled Rogers and Van der Nest to escape with all the captured cattle.<sup>52</sup> While the Baviaans Boers confiscated these animals, Maqoma tried to prevent another attack by returning thirty-four horses to Greef. His chiefdom was not yet ready to confront the white extortionists. Conversely, colonial seizure of Maqoma's stock only encouraged him to

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<sup>52</sup>PP, C.252 of 1835, Papers Relative to the Condition and Treatment of the Native Inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope, pp. 145-146, Rogers to Somerset, 13 January 1826. Since Rogers admitted that his patrol was nearly humbled by the Jingqi, there is no reason to disbelieve his report of Xhosa military innovations.

sanction covert cattle theft from the settlers as a way to repair the damaged pastoral-patronage system. Jongumsobomvu's people relied on cattle which he lent them. Therefore, colonial raids weakened the chief's mechanism for ensuring control and attracting new subjects. Losses had to be replaced. However, this was in contradiction to Maqoma's inability to defend his chiefdom from white military superiority. It involved an awkward position.

Throughout the following months of 1826 Maqoma's people conducted minor raids for cattle and horses against the nearby settlers. In November 1826 Jingqi warriors seized several dozen horses from a Baviaans farmer. When Somerset visited Maqoma to inquire about this matter, the chief said "I know nothing about this".<sup>53</sup> After reports of several more stock thefts on the Baviaans, the commandant instructed Thomson to tell Maqoma "that if the stolen horses are not returned he will face more summary measures" and also to enlist the aid of Ngqika to put pressure on the Jingqi.<sup>54</sup> Thomson visited Ngcwenxa in early December. Realizing that Somerset was willing to launch another major offensive into his area, Jongumsobomvu returned all the horses to the missionary. The young chief gave Thomson a message for Somerset which stated "his determination to act sincerely and uprightly towards the colony, so far as his authority and influence extend".<sup>55</sup> Although Maqoma had not acquired a significant quantity of horses or firearms, he saw how easily Thomson had defused the tense situation. Perhaps a white missionary, living permanently within the Jingqi chiefdom, might prevent further colonial aggression. By this time the Tyume station of Thomson and Brownlee had attracted fifty-six

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<sup>53</sup>(CA) CO 287, Somerset to Secretary to Government, 14 November 1826.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., Somerset to Thomson, 19 November 1826.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., Thomson to Somerset, 5 December 1826.

Xhosa families.<sup>56</sup> Maqoma thought that a similar mission on the Kat might provide a direct line of communication to Somerset in the form of a European teacher with a vested interest in maintaining the Jingqi in this area.

The colonial labour shortage became acute in 1827. Indentured Khoi servants and captive San were not meeting settler requirements. Covertly, Afrikaner and English farmers in the eastern Cape were purchasing Sotho and Tswana people who had been seized by Griqua horsemen north of the Orange River. This was doubly illegal. London had banned the slave-trade and Cape Town had forbidden Africans from independent chiefdoms to enter colonial boundaries.<sup>57</sup> Although subordinate to Acting Governor Major General Bourke, Somerset's interests were linked integrally with those of the frontier settlers. With correspondence to Cape Town taking nearly two weeks, officials in Grahamstown could easily circumvent colonial regulations and invent cover stories which would never be investigated. Somerset needed a powerful justification to bring many more Africans into the eastern Cape. Under the watchful eye of a few idealistic missionaries and philanthropists, it was difficult to launch large scale labour raids against the Rharhabe chiefdoms on the frontier. People further away from the colony ideally would become the targets. The demonic and mythical image of the Zulu King Shaka had already been publicized by illegal British slavers operating in Natal. It had been an effective cover up. Enhancing this concept, Somerset and his settler henchmen invented the image of "Fetcani" hordes, set in motion by Shaka's wars of conquest, threatening the colony and driving refugees toward the border. Throughout 1827 and 1828, the commandant dispatched patrols beyond the colonial frontier and informed Cape Town that he was collecting intelligence on the

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<sup>56</sup>(CA) CO 291, Thomson to Secretary to Government, 17 June 1826.

<sup>57</sup>The governor seemed to have knowledge of these developments, PP, C.252 of 1835, pp. 21-23, Bourke to Goderich, 15 October 1827.

"Fetcani" threat and protecting helpless Africans. In reality, these expeditions were capturing people for service on settler farms. Somerset was the real raider. Official reports claimed that these labourers were refugees who had fled Shaka and were brought into the colony and "apprenticed" to Europeans for humanitarian reasons.<sup>58</sup> A separate but related cover story was fabricated for the enslavement of the Rharhabe. Displaced by colonial cattle raids, many frontier Xhosa living around certain mission stations were described as Fingoes who had fled Zulu-ravaged Natal. In turn, they were brought into the colony and hired out to settlers. Once again, this sort of coercive labour recruitment was camouflaged as philanthropy. Supposedly, these Africans were being delivered from the barbarity of their own society. In August 1827 Ngqika demanded that "Umfengus" living at Thomson's Tyume station be returned to their kraals within his chiefdom.<sup>59</sup> The alibis of Somerset and his accomplices were blatant lies which have been perpetuated by settler historians such as Theal and Corey and blindly accepted by the more recent

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<sup>58</sup>For the pioneering work on this subject see Julian Cobbing, "The Mfecane as Alibi; Thoughts on the Battles of Dithakong and Mbolompo", Journal of African History, 29, (1988). Cobbing's scholarship has been the center of an intense historical debate between those who want to abandon the concept of a Zulu-centric time of troubles known as the Mfecane and others who strive to maintain the orthodoxy. Cobbing has claimed that the so-called Mfecane, as an historical concept, is based on the fabricated accounts of colonial slavers and should be jettisoned because it justifies white supremacy by portraying Africans as inherently violent. Since I agree with Cobbing's basic premise, the term "Mfecane", in this text, has been restricted to the footnotes in an effort to demonstrate that history can be written without it. For a standard interpretation of the Mfecane see J.D. Omer-Cooper, The Zulu Aftermath (Evanston, 1966); Thompson and Wilson, The Oxford History of South Africa; and Peires, The House of Phalo. Recently, E. Eldredge has attacked Cobbing's claim that Portuguese slaving out of Delagoa Bay stimulated state formation and migration in the Natal area and C. Hamilton has argued that British traders operating at Port Natal did not lead slave-raids and did not vilify Shaka. See Eldredge, "Sources of Conflict" and Hamilton, "The Character of Shaka". For a cutting and effective response to these criticisms see J. Cobbing, "Ousting the Mfecane", Seminar Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, 1991.

<sup>59</sup>For Ngqika's demand see (CL) MS 9,037, Minutes of the Presbytery of Kaffraria, Vol I, Report of Thomson, 8 August 1827. For a detailed exposure of the Fingo myth see Alan Charles Webster, "Land Expropriation and Labour Extraction: The War of 1835 and the Emancipation of the Fingo", MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1991.

liberal and radical schools.

Observing the influx of forced African labour into the colony, Maqoma became increasingly concerned about European aggression. He would have to adopt a more defensive stance. While the governor, in early January 1827, suggested that Somerset give Maqoma a reward for returning stolen horses, the commandant refused. Somerset insisted that a large herd of cattle had been rustled from the Baviaans settlement and traced to the Jingqi chiefdom. Although Jongumsobomvu had surrendered twenty-one head to the Europeans, fifty-eight were still missing. Maqoma claimed complete ignorance.<sup>60</sup> Whether the Jingqi had stolen the cattle or not, this issue served to maintain tension between the young chief and Colonel Somerset. Consequently, the commandant had a standing excuse to raid Maqoma's kraals whenever he or his settler friends needed additional stock. Less than three weeks later, a Boer commando led by Field Cornet Van der Nest, attacked Maqoma's Great Place. They sought cattle and slaves. Prepared for such a raid, the Jingqi had hidden their women, children, and stock. Employing more cautious tactics, Jongumsobomvu's warriors drove the horsemen away without sustaining serious casualties. Without British army assistance, the Baviaans burghers did not have the discipline or firepower to defeat the Kat River Xhosa. Since the raid had been an unauthorized failure, Somerset claimed to have had no knowledge of it but did not punish Van der Nest. Maqoma complained that he had been attacked while in peaceful communication with the colony.<sup>61</sup> Tension increased.

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<sup>60</sup>(CA) CO 333, Somerset to Secretary to Government, 1 January 1827.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., Somerset to Secretary to Government, 30 January 1827. A.E. du Toit, "Maqoma", Dictionary of South African Biography, Vol. II, pp. 439-441, claims that from 1827 to 1828 the Jingqi were hiding from "Mfecane" raiders. In reality, Maqoma was trying to avoid the slaving operations of Henry Somerset.

Around the same time Somerset reported to Cape Town that "Fetcani" hordes were driving a large Thembu chiefdom south-west toward the Winterberg mountains and the colonial border. Swearing to protect these unfortunate people, the colonel concealed more sinister plans.<sup>62</sup> The Thembu chiefdoms of Bowana and Galela had hived off from their paramount, Vusani, in the mid-1820's. Initially settling within the territory of Hintsa's Gcaleka, they were soon expelled for misbehaviour and cattle theft. Migrating west away from both Vusani and Hintsa, these renegades after being harassed by mounted Griqua slavers, headed south-west toward the colony.<sup>63</sup> By March 1827 the migrant Thembu had established themselves from the Winterberg range to the Klipplaat River. This was just over the colonial border and immediately north of both the Baviaans Boers and Magoma's Kat River chiefdom. Attempting to form an alliance with the powerful Cape Colony, Bowana requested that the settlers instruct his people in agricultural methods.<sup>64</sup> Both settlers and colonial officials were excited about the prospect of such a large and cooperative labour force on the frontier. In April the Moravian missionaries sent the Reverend W. Lemmerz to investigate the possibility of establishing a station among Bowana's subjects. Pleased with his friendly host, Lemmerz, by July, had begun constructing a temporary mission on the Oukraal River.<sup>65</sup> Interestingly, the Moravians were in direct correspondence with both Somerset and the Cape Town administration.

Leading a commando to Galela's area in August, William Mackay, the Landdrost of Somerset District, reported that this chief had been attacked

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., Somerset to Secretary to Government, 2 January 1827.

<sup>63</sup>Webster, "Land Expropriation", p. 54.

<sup>64</sup>(CA) CO 323, George Rennie to Secretary to Government, 16 March 1827.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., Hallbeck to Secretary to Government, 20 April 1827; see also Bernhard Kruger, The Pear Tree Blossoms: A History of the Moravian Missions in South Africa 1737-1869, (Genadendal, 1966), pp. 166-174.

by "Fetcani" raiders from the interior who themselves were fleeing the wrath of Shaka. He advocated the mounting of burgher patrols to protect the Thembu.<sup>66</sup> In fact, these so-called marauding hordes were most probably Vusani's warriors sent to bring back the delinquent chiefs. Mackay wanted permission to lead settler labour raids beyond the frontier. A few days later Somerset visited the area and, without any evidence, confirmed Mackay's story. The commandant even went so far as to claim that Maqoma had requested military assistance from the colony to defend his people from the "Fetcani".<sup>67</sup> Given the tension between Somerset and Maqoma at the time, and the lack of further evidence for the existence of any horde threatening the Jingqi, this entire set of correspondence seems highly questionable. Despite the supposed destabilization of the interior and Ngqika's reported fear of being attacked by the "Fetcani", trade fairs continued at Fort Willshire with hundreds of pounds of ivory and beads changing hands. Certainly, if the inland area had been in the state of turmoil reported by Somerset and his henchmen, ivory, a product obtained by the Xhosa through long distance trade with the interior, would not have been present in such quantities.<sup>68</sup> While Bowana and Galela secured European support against Vusani by giving tribute cattle to the Baviaans settlers, the migrant Thembu stole stock from Jingqi kraals and may have been the so-called "horde" which Maqoma had allegedly complained about.<sup>69</sup> The Thembu represented a new and hostile player in Maqoma's political arena.

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<sup>66</sup>Theal, Records, Vol 34, pp. 463-468, MacKay to Secretary to Government, 8 August 1827.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., pp. 468-469, Somerset to Secretary to Government, 12 August 1827.

<sup>68</sup>For the report of Ngqika's fear of the "Fetcani" see (CA) CO 333, H.S. Omand to Somerset, 3 August 1827; for the fairs see (CA) CO 329, Return of Trade Fairs at Grahamstown, 18 and 25 December 1827.

<sup>69</sup>(CA) CO 323, Hallbeck to Secretary to Government, 6 September 1827. For theft from Maqoma see Webster, "Land Expropriation", p. 54.



In early 1828 Maqoma sent several messages to the Glasgow Missionary Society at Lovedale, a new mission on the Ncerha River, expressing interest in the establishment of a station in his area.<sup>70</sup> Two developments made this vital. Firstly, with the permanent placement of a Moravian missionary and ten armed Khoi bodyguards among Bowana's Thembu, this chieftdom became a new ally of the colony.<sup>71</sup> Secondly, Ngqika and his favourite son, Tyali, were engaged actively in helping Somerset seize cattle from Ngeno's Mbalu. Maqoma was surrounded by enemies. The Baviaans Boers threatened from the west, Fort Beaufort dominated the south, Ngqika loomed to the west, and the Thembu rustled from the north. Cautiously, Jongumsobomvu bought time by giving cattle tribute to Somerset.<sup>72</sup> Travelling to Maqoma's Great Place in late February, the Reverends John Ross and Alex McDiarmid were received warmly. The chief was pleased by the young Ross who seemed less pro-settler than the hated Thomson. The three men spent several days riding throughout the Jingqi country and selected two potential sites for the mission. Returning to the Tyume institution, Ross reported the chief "seemed favourable to the undertaking and entered into all the views of the Brethren" and he intended "to commence the station immediately".<sup>73</sup> Accompanied by Charles Henry Matshaya, now a teacher and interpreter, Ross and McDiarmid returned to the upper Kat in late March to begin construction of their new post. However, hostility from local headmen prevented the missionaries from establishing themselves in the first possible location. These kraal rulers feared that their subjects might eventually ignore traditional values and institutions by moving to the proposed station. Anarchy would result. Additionally, they must have disliked the idea of a former

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<sup>70</sup>(CL) MS 9,037, Minutes, Report of Thomson, 28 February 1828; and (CL) MS 2638, Helen Ross to Parents, 11 March 1828.

<sup>71</sup>(CA) CO 357, Hallbeck to Secretary to Government, 3 January 1828.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., Somerset to Secretary to Government, 5 February 1828.

<sup>73</sup>(CL) MS 9,037, Minutes, Report of Thomson, 6 March 1828.

headman, Matshaya, attracting outcasts and organizing them into a rival kraal. Appealing to Maqoma, Ross and his companions were given the second location which was just a few miles from the Great Place of Ngcwenxa. Here they would be supervised and protected. The missionaries began constructing two European style houses and toured nearby kraals conducting religious instruction. Initially, the Jingqi were sceptical about these strange newcomers. They were viewed with suspicion.<sup>74</sup> At the same time the distrusted Thomson visited Maqoma to investigate his sudden interest in Christianity. Although the chief had always been uncertain of missionaries, Thomson was pleasantly surprised by his change of attitude. Referring to the new station, Jongumsobomvu:

wished that it might be near his own kraal or village, so that, though necessarily often absent, when at home he might be able to hear the word of God, to learn his duty, and know how to govern his people.<sup>75</sup>

However, when Thomson asked whether the chief would encourage his followers to attend religious instruction at the mission, Maqoma changed the subject of conversation.<sup>76</sup> Keeping the white teachers content would have to be balanced with the preservation of traditional society and politics. Clearly, Jongumsobomvu was attempting to please the missionaries as a way of placating the voracious colony.

With Ngqika still powerful in the east and colonial aggression allayed temporarily by the presence of missionaries among the Jingqi, Maqoma expanded gradually south-west toward the Koonap and Waterkloof rivers. In mid-April 1828 a colonial patrol captured one of the chief's

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid, Report of Thomson, 3 April 1828.

<sup>75</sup>GMS Quarterly Papers, pp. 9-10, Thomson to Secretary to Government, 10 April 1828.

<sup>76</sup>Donovan Williams, "The Missionaries on the Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony, 1799-1853", Ph.D. Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1959, p. 73. See also Robert H.W. Shepard, Lovedale, South Africa; the Story of a Century 1841-1941 (Lovedale, 1941), pp. 71-72.

scouting parties, three Xhosa and two Khoi warriors, on the banks of the Waterkloof near the heavily forested Mtontsi (or Kroome) highlands. While these men were imprisoned in neighbouring Fort Beaufort, Maqoma attempted unsuccessfully to secure their release. He claimed they were a hunting expedition which had wandered off course. Somerset was not convinced.<sup>77</sup> Within a few weeks more Jingqi had crept into the Kroome bush and others established new kraals along the Koonap. From his adolescent days on the lower Kat, Maqoma knew that the thick forests of Mtontsi could provide a sanctuary against mounted European attackers. According to Somerset, these Xhosa were dangerously close to the Baviaans settlers and he announced that he intended eventually to drive them east.<sup>78</sup> However, several more pressing issues distracted the commandant from the Jingqi. Most of his forces were involved in a confusing campaign to recover stolen colonial horses from the elusive Mbalu. Simultaneously, the governor's intention to promulgate Ordinances 49 and 50 would free indentured Khoi servants but allow Africans from independent chiefdoms to enter the colony as employees for white farmers.<sup>79</sup> Pressed by the labour hungry settlers, Somerset began developing an alibi for a large scale slave raid well beyond the colonial frontier. On the fifth of May 1828 the commandant visited Ngqika's Great Place to discuss the alleged Mbalu horse theft. Although Ngeno was too afraid of capture to attend, Ngqika, Tyali, Botomane, and Maqoma met Somerset. Jongumsobomvu cleverly destabilized his father's renewed alliance with the British and simultaneously diverted the commandant's attention away from his followers on the Koonap and Kroome. According to Somerset:

Maqoma expressed himself strongly against Gaika, and said that he had full means of

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<sup>77</sup>(CA) CO 357, Captain John Batty to Somerset, 16 April 1828, and Somerset to Secretary to Government, 24 April 1828.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., Somerset to Secretary to Government, 2 May 1828.

<sup>79</sup>For a detailed analysis of Ordinances 49 and 50 see MacMillian, Bantu, Boer, and Briton.

securing the plunderers, without being himself occupied in pursuit of them. I am informed by Maqoma that he believes Gaika has become reconciled with Eno (Nqeno) and they are now acting in concert.<sup>80</sup>

The Jingqi chief continued by complaining that it was unfair for him to be attacked by patrols while Ngqika and Nqeno were the real thieves. Promising to help Somerset apprehend all rustlers, Maqoma accused Bowana's and Galela's Thembu of stealing from both himself and the colony.<sup>81</sup> The following week a British officer patrolling the Koonap, reported that the Jingqi were too numerous in that area for a normal size commando to expel them.<sup>82</sup> Somerset postponed mounting a significant expedition against Maqoma. A more important and difficult operation required all the military might he could muster. The Jingqi could rest easy.

By June 1828 Ross and McDiarmid had constructed two houses and moved their families to the new station on the upper Kat. Naming the mission Balfour<sup>83</sup>, the teachers made regular preaching tours of neighbouring Jingqi kraals and attracted a small group of visitors to daily divine service. While Maqoma attended public worship on several occasions, he did not express any interest in conversion. To the chief these missionaries were insurance against colonial attack. To the Jingqi people they were unusual and sometimes intriguing strangers. Charles Henry Matshaya, known to many in the chiefdom, tried desperately to convince the headmen to send their subjects' children to school at the station. Within a month Ross began instructing a small and varying group of young Jingqi students. Their only text was a short Christian catechism published in an early written form of Xhosa. Although Jingqi interest in

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<sup>80</sup>(CA) CO 357, Somerset to Secretary to Government, 8 May 1828.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>(CA) CO 357, Captain Armstrong to Somerset, 14 May 1828.

<sup>83</sup>In honour of the late Reverend Robert Balfour.

the missionaries seemed to have been based primarily on a fascination with their alien behaviour, the chief ensured that his guests were welcomed into every kraal. With typical nineteenth century missionary zeal, Ross, McDiarmid, and Matshaya spent days riding from village to village reading from their small religious book. However, potential converts were not forthcoming.<sup>84</sup> Around this time Maqoma's senior wife, Noxlana who was of Thembu origin, gave birth to a son. Naming this infant Namba, which means python, Jongumsobomvu recognized him as heir to the chiefdom. He was Maqoma's Great Son. Since famous Xhosa chiefs were often compared to powerful snakes, Namba's name symbolized his mother's royal heritage and his future position as chief of the Jingqi. Predictably, the chief's eldest son, twelve year old Kona, resented the superiority of his youngest half-brother.<sup>85</sup> Following in his father's footsteps, Kona was proclaimed as the Right-Hand Son. He would eventually found his own autonomous chiefdom.

Colonial labour raids now began. Officially passed in July 1828, Ordinance 49 gave the settlers permission to invite African workers into the colony. Later in the same month Major William Dundas, a frontier Landdrost, led a mounted expedition of thirty-one Afrikaner burghers and twelve British soldiers beyond the Great Kei and Mbashe river. Somewhere near the modern town of Umtata, this force attacked what Dundas described as "Fetcani". Bringing 25,000 captured cattle and 100 slaves back to the colony, the Landdrost fabricated the story that the Transkei was about to be invaded by the a Zulu army.<sup>86</sup> Under the guise of defending the colony

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<sup>84</sup>(CL) MS 9,037, Minutes, Report of Thomson, 5 June 1828, Reports of Ross, 10 July and 7 August 1828.

<sup>85</sup>In September 1835 Namba was estimated to be seven years old, see le Cordeur, The Journal of Stretch, p. 140. For more on Noxlana see chapter five of this thesis.

<sup>86</sup>For the slaves see John Brownlee, Buffalo River, The Colonist, 12 August 1828. See also Cobbing, "The Roots of Violence", p. 21.

from Shaka and protecting the distant Gcaleka, Thembu, and Mpondo, Lieutenant Colonel Somerset mustered the largest European army ever assembled in South Africa. With the Rharhabe looking on fearfully, the commandant, in early August, left Grahamstown with several British infantry companies, most of the Cape Mounted Rifles, a large settler commando, mounted Khoi mercenaries, and a number of artillery pieces. A thousand men strong, this column crossed the Kei and rendezvoused with 26,000 warriors from Hintsa's Gcaleka, Vusani's Thembu, and Faku's Mpondo. These chiefs allied with the European raiders in order to capture large herds of cattle and prevent colonial aggression against their own subjects. On the twenty-eighth of August this massive force attacked Chief Matiwane's Ngwane on the plain of Mbolompo above the Umtata River. The victims had just fled south from the Highveld where they had been attacked by Griqua slavers. They were now the target of Somerset's ambitious labour raid. According to the commandant, his African allies slaughtered thousands of men, women, and children and seized all the victims' stock. Colonial howitzer fire killed 400 Ngwane who had hidden in a nearby forest. Somerset captured over 100 women and children in order to "save them from Hintsa and Vusani". While these prisoners were brought to Fort Beaufort and sold to white farmers, the commandant claimed he had defeated a Zulu horde.<sup>87</sup> However, settler labour requirements were not yet satisfied as the Mbolompo raid had not been a tremendous success.

News of Somerset's massive commando returning to the colony with African slaves prompted Magoma to placate the whites further. Following the "battle" of Mbolompo, Jingqi attendance at Ross's daily prayer meetings increased dramatically. This was no coincidence. Dressed in European clothing, Jongumsobomvu attended divine service at Balfour and invited the missionaries to visit his Great Place to conduct a day of

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<sup>87</sup>Cobbing, "Mfecane as Alibi", pp. 502-503. For the captives see (CA) CO 24, Governor to D. Campbell, 24 February 1829. For a settler version of Mbolompo see Rivet-Carnac, Hawk's Eye, pp. 70-73.

religious instruction. By November, with the colonial threat no longer as immediate, attendance at Balfour declined. Maintaining their zealous attitude, the missionaries visited up to thirty-three Jingqi kraals every month.<sup>88</sup> Magoma had avoided the colonial slavers.

In July 1828 the Moravian mission among Bowana's Thembu moved to the Klipplaat River and established the Shiloh station. The chief continued to cooperate with Reverend Lemmerz and the colonial administration sent £200 and over a dozen muskets to the missionaries.<sup>89</sup> With Bowana receiving all the colonial support, Galela's autonomy eroded and conflict developed between the chiefs. Around October 1828 Galela's warriors attacked some of Bowana's kraals and seized a significant quantity of cattle. Reporting this as a "Fetcani" raid, the Moravians had Somerset dispatch a colonial patrol to protect the station and enforce Bowana's hegemony.<sup>90</sup> Subsequent violence between the feuding Thembu was described in European correspondence as "Fetcani" disturbances. In reality, the colonial-missionary presence, while aimed at securing Bowana's chiefdom as a cooperative labour source and regional ally, had stimulated a civil war.<sup>91</sup> The only way to legitimize sending colonial troops to support Bowana was to disguise the conflict and link it to the Shakan myth. In the confusion and desperation of warfare, Thembu warriors from both chiefdoms rustled cattle from neighbouring Jingqi kraals. Additionally, the Thembu were encroaching on the Koonap River which Magoma was attempting to settle. In fact, the kraal of Quasha, one of Bowana's

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<sup>88</sup>(CL) MS 9,037, Minutes, Reports of Ross, 15 September, 6 November, 4 December 1828.

<sup>89</sup>(CA) CO 357, Hallback to Secretary to Government, 10 March and 18 July 1828.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., Warden to Somerset, 30 October 1828.

<sup>91</sup>For the Bowana-Galela conflict see (CA) CO 366, Somerset to Secretary to Government. 29 February 1829.

headmen, was a mere two miles north of the Jingqi Great Place.<sup>92</sup> By December Jongumsobomvu had demanded that Bowana stop the fighting, return stolen Rharhabe stock, and withdraw from Jingqi land. Claiming that Maqoma had threatened Bowana for unknown reasons, Lemmerz requested more colonial protection for his chief and gathered local Thembu around the armed mission.<sup>93</sup> The troublesome Thembu were jeopardizing Jingqi cattle and land.

Maqoma had to deal decisively with both Bowana and Galela. Tension developed between Somerset and Tyali when the latter raided Rharhabe outcasts living at the Tyume mission.<sup>94</sup> Hoping that this new hostility would divert European attention from the Jingqi and Thembu, Jongumsobomvu visited one of Bowana's kraals on the Koonap. While Maqoma intended to intimidate this Thembu headman into leaving the area, the Jingqi chief discovered several colonial cattle in the village. This gave Jongumsobomvu an excuse to respond militarily against Bowana. Seizing ten cattle as a fine from the Thembu headman, Maqoma returned the following day and forced the kraal to leave by taking all its stock. Stubbornly, Bowana refused to withdraw the remainder of his villages from the Koonap. Jongumsobomvu resorted to bold action. As the sun rose on the twenty-fourth of January 1829, Maqoma's warriors simultaneously destroyed every Thembu kraal along the Koonap, killed many of both Bowana's and Galela's people, and confiscated over 5000 cattle. Fleeing toward the colonial border, many terrified Thembu were slaughtered within sight of settler farms and Bowana himself narrowly escaped death.<sup>95</sup> Many Thembu entered

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<sup>92</sup>(CA) LG 9, Statement of Christian Muller, 28 April 1829.

<sup>93</sup>(CA) CO 357, Hallbeck to Secretary to Government, 18 December 1828.

<sup>94</sup>(CA) CO 366, Somerset to Secretary to Government, 15 January 1829..

<sup>95</sup>Wesleyan Missionary Society, South African Correspondence, MIC/F 637 Fishe 66, Stephen Kay to Wesleyan Committee, 30 June 1829. (CA) LG 9, D. Campbell to Somerset, 27 March 1829, enclosed statements of Bowana and Galela.



the colony. The Moravians were mortified. With this attack Maqoma hoped to crush the intruding Thembu chiefs, prevent the colony from gaining another regional ally, and acquire enough additional strength to defeat Ngqika.<sup>96</sup> Absorbing the Thembu cattle would make up for losses to colonial raids and attract many new followers. The continuing drought to the east made Jongumsobomvu even more determined to conquer the well-watered Koonap valley.<sup>97</sup> Throughout this campaign Maqoma relied on the presence of Ross and McDiarmid to prevent colonial retaliation. However, the chief did not inform his missionaries about the attack. This would prove ultimately to have been a serious mistake.

The colonial administration became determined to punish Maqoma for his attack on their Thembu allies. In early February 1829 Andries Stockenstrom, the new Commissioner-General of the Eastern Cape, advised Sir Lowry Cole, the governor, to expel the Jingqi from the Neutral Zone. Stockenstrom thought conflict might be avoided if Maqoma were given two months to return the Thembu stock, harvest his crops, and leave the Koonap

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<sup>96</sup>There has been considerable confusion about Maqoma's attack on the Thembu. Jeffrey Peires, in The House of Phalo, p. 39, claims that Maqoma's only reason for raiding the Thembu was that they had settled on his land and he wanted to reduce them to political subservience. Peires goes on to state that Maqoma had no way of knowing that the colony would act against him. While Peires's initial point is valid, Maqoma had accepted missionaries and accused the Thembu of stealing colonial stock. These were attempts to prevent colonial retaliation which he realized was a distinct possibility. Peires's proof is a single oral tradition in which an informant stated that "Maqoma wanted to make those Thembu Xhosa". See Peires's interview with Chief Gladstone Maqoma, Gqungqe Location, Kentani District, 19 December 1976. For counter evidence see the previous footnote. On page 53 of "Land Expropriation", Alan Webster mistakenly claims that Maqoma attacked the Thembu to punish Galela for killing Bowana and stealing cattle. However, the raid was directed primarily against Bowana who was not killed until 1830. Finally, Clifton Crais, White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-Industrial South Africa, (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 113-114 states that Maqoma was invited by Bowana to destroy Galela who was a notorious cattle thief. However, before the raid Maqoma had complained about Bowana's people stealing Jingqi stock. Subsequently, Jongumsobomvu's warriors directed their assault primarily against Bowana who was nearly killed.

<sup>97</sup>For drought see (CL) MS 9,037, Report of Thomson, 5 February 1829; and (CL) MS 2638, Helen Ross to Grace Begbie, 5 September 1829.

and Kat rivers. However, the commissioner-general warned of possible resistance by the chief and decided that the Jingqi would be replaced by a military post to prevent any re-occupation of the Neutral Zone.<sup>98</sup> Accepting Stockenstrom's counsel, the governor ordered Somerset to orchestrate the expulsion. In late February the commandant, accompanied by a sullen Bowana, visited Maqoma's Great Place on the upper Kat. Jongumsobomvu was informed that he had two months to return the Thembu herd and abandon the Neutral Zone. This was disastrous. Claiming that he had intervened in the Thembu conflict at Bowana's invitation, Maqoma promised to produce all the seized stock. He continued by expressing a desire to co-exist peacefully with the colony and Somerset admitted that he had been prompt in giving supposedly stolen cattle to the settlers. Surprisingly, the commandant advised the governor that it would not be wise to drive the Jingqi out of the Neutral Zone as there were harsh drought conditions in independent Xhosaland.<sup>99</sup> In reality, the expulsion of Maqoma meant that the settlers would no longer receive his cattle tribute and Somerset would no longer have a standing excuse to raid the Jingqi. The governor ignored this counsel. Maqoma would be expelled. The decision was final. A week later, in early March, Somerset visited Ngqika's Great Place on the Keiskamma. Expressing his anger with Maqoma for attacking the Thembu, the Rharhabe paramount pledged support for any punitive colonial action as this expulsion would facilitate Ngqika's re-absorption of the Jingqi.<sup>100</sup> Investigating the raid on the Thembu, Duncan Campbell, the Civil Commissioner of Albany and a victim of Jingqi stock theft, reported that Maqoma had been the aggressor and supported Stockenstrom's proposal.<sup>101</sup> Powerful forces were conspiring against

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<sup>98</sup>Hutton, The Autobiography of Stockenstrom Vol I, p. 301.

<sup>99</sup>(CA) CO 366, Somerset to Secretary to Government, 12 and 29 February 1829.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., Somerset to Secretary to Government, 6 March 1829.

<sup>101</sup>(CA) LG 9, D. Campbell to Secretary to Government, 27 March 1829.

Jongumsobomvu.

Unwilling to re-imburse the Thembu, Maqoma turned to his missionaries for assistance. Attendance at Balfour increased once again and the chief told the Reverend Ross that he was afraid the colonial commandos were going to drive his subjects away from the station. However, the missionary seemed unaware of Jongumsobomvu's raid on the Thembu. The chief's mother, Nothonto, and his eldest daughter, twelve year old Taselo, became regular visitors to Helen Ross, the missionary's wife, who taught them English and clothed them in European attire. Wearing dresses and reading from a catechism, these royal Jingqi women were soliciting sympathy for their patriarch. Nothonto established her own kraal just two miles from the institution. Impressing the missionaries, Maqoma himself wore a waistcoat and trousers and became John Ross's best pupil. Unfortunately, the chief had no way of realizing that his missionaries lacked significant political influence. Unlike Thomson and the Moravians, letters from Balfour did not go to any colonial official. Ross and McDiarmid were isolated.<sup>102</sup> Travelling north for a few days, Jongumsobomvu visited Mapassa, Bowana's powerful son, and attempted unsuccessfully to have Bowana reject the colonial demands for re-imbursement.<sup>103</sup> Although his two months had elapsed, by late April 1829 Maqoma was still inhabiting the Neutral Zone and had not returned any Thembu cattle. Stockenström wrote to Ross warning him about the forthcoming expulsion but received no reply. Interestingly, Ross's regular reports and personal correspondence makes no mention of such a letter and he probably did not receive it.<sup>104</sup> Somerset realized that a

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<sup>102</sup>(CL) MS 9,037, Minutes, Report of Thomson, 2 April 1829; and (CL) MS 7720, J. Ross to mother, 1 May 1829.

<sup>103</sup>(CA) CO 366, Somerset to Secretary to Government, 9 April 1829.

<sup>104</sup>Hutton, Stockenström, Vol. I, pp. 311-315; and (CL) MS 9,037, Minutes, Report of Ross, 4 May 1829.

massive cattle raid could be launched legally against the Jingqi. Stockenstrom informed all the other frontier chiefs that Maqoma was being expelled from the Neutral Zone and warned them not to get involved.<sup>105</sup> Confrontation became inevitable.

On the first of May 1829 Lieutenant Colonel Somerset led his Cape Mounted Riflemen out of Fort Beaufort and north up the Kat. Simultaneously, Stockenstrom organized a settler commando on the Koonap and by the end of the day had rendezvoused with the commandant. Reaching Jingqi territory on the following morning, the three hundred man force found many of the kraals abandoned. Somerset and Stockenstrom enjoyed breakfast at Balfour and discovered that Maqoma had hidden his subjects and cattle in nearby forests. At the request of the commissioner-general, Ross sent a message to the chief asking him to come to the mission. Jongumsobomvu refused. He did not trust the Europeans. Early that afternoon Stockenstrom, leaving the commando at Balfour, met Maqoma in a secluded kloof. Shaking hands with the chief, the commissioner-general said "If you give up the Tambookie (Thembu) cattle and quit this territory with your people we shall renew our former relations". In light of the many cattle extorted from Maqoma by the colony this statement must have seemed ridiculous. Stockenstrom warned that if the Jingqi did not comply the commando would scour the country, seize all their cattle, and destroy their huts. However, the commissioner-general promised to spare the fields and allow the women to harvest and carry away their maize and melons. He assured Maqoma that "not a single shot will be fired... unless your people resist". Adamantly, Jongumsobomvu claimed that he had not harmed the colonists and had attacked Galela's Thembu at Bowana's request. Seeing through the chief's diplomatic prevarication, Stockenstrom repeated his ultimatum. Maqoma complained that:

The people plunder and you hold the chiefs

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<sup>105</sup>Hutton, Stockenstrom, Vol. I, p. 313.

responsible for everything. I hope you will intercede with the Governor to let me live here, and I will give all the Tambookie cattle I can still find; but I believe I have sent all I had to Fort Beaufort.<sup>106</sup>

While Stockenstrom recognized that Jongumsobomvu had delivered some cattle tribute to the colony, he still demanded that the Jingqi withdraw from the Neutral Zone and surrender 3000 head. Remembering Somerset's slave raids of the previous year, Maqoma agreed to the European terms. He was not prepared to risk the complete destruction of his chiefdom. However, neither the chief nor his subjects could give up that many cattle so easily. Surrendering 3000 head would mean repossessing royal stock from the commoners who relied on them for milk and blood. With the drought, this dependence had become more acute. Commoners did not want to loose their loan-cattle. A few hours later, before Maqoma could relay orders to his headmen, Somerset's cavalry began combing the forests and seizing hidden herds. Predictably, those Jingqi unable to escape the colonial menace fought to defend themselves. A few spears were thrown and Somerset responded with murderous firepower. Many Jingqi were killed. Hundreds of cattle were seized. The chief was infuriated. That night a party of Jongumsobomvu's warriors crept into the colonial camp and slaughtered six captured cattle and three horses before being driven away. At sunrise Stockenstrom received a message from Maqoma stating that all his cattle had been confiscated. Through the messenger, the commissioner-general informed the chief that as his people had resisted all their huts would be burned and more stock seized. Despite John Ross's objection to violence on the Sabbath, Somerset's soldiers swept the banks of the upper Kat evicting the Jingqi at gunpoint and torching their kraals. Watching from Balfour, the missionaries saw smoke rising above the surrounding hills. Maqoma's Great Place was reduced to cinders. Incensed, Helen Ross forbade the commando to camp near the station and refused Somerset's request for bread. That evening Maqoma visited his old friend Charles Henry Matshaya

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid., pp. 317-318.

at the mission but ignored Stockenstrom's invitation to go to Fort Beaufort. Jongumsobomvu had seen many Africans imprisoned there. On the morning of May fourth the colonial expedition escorted 3000 cattle south to Fort Beaufort<sup>107</sup>, and Maqoma led his warriors east of the Neutral Zone. Reluctantly, they entered Ngqika's domain. Under the supervision of Nothonto, the Jingqi women worked feverishly all day to harvest the crops. Since this process usually required several weeks, not half of the produce was salvaged. The following day a weeping Helen Ross observed hundreds of dispossessed women and children walking east with huge burdens on their heads.<sup>108</sup> Ngcwenxa was abandoned. The chiefdom had been expelled.

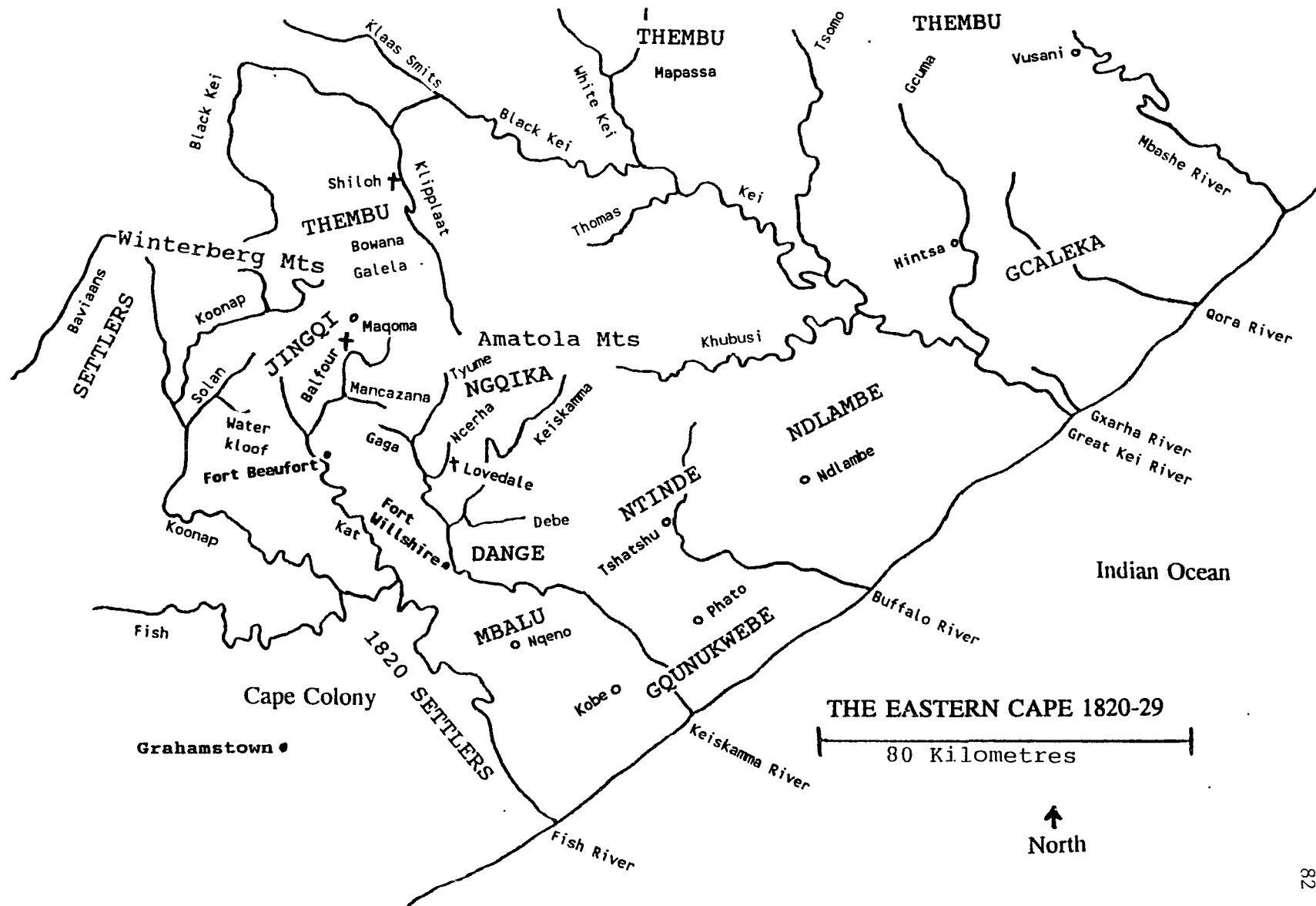
In 1829 Maqoma was approximately thirty-one years old. Short but muscular, the chief was more charismatic than ever. His slightly receding hairline gave an appearance of maturity. The Jingqi still adored him. However, Jongumsobomvu was bitter and resentful. With over 16,000 subjects living in more than thirty-three large kraals, his Kat River chiefdom had been the fastest growing Xhosa polity in the region. Additionally, his people had enjoyed a remarkably fertile and well-watered area while huge herds attracted new followers. Rharhabe, Khoi, and even Thembu flocked to his side. Unfortunately, the Jingqi were the continual victims of colonial extortion and cattle raids. Maqoma was forced to pay tribute to the settlers to avoid the more devastating effects of slaving. The chief had attempted unsuccessfully to employ white missionaries as a medium of peaceful communication with the colony. While it seemed that

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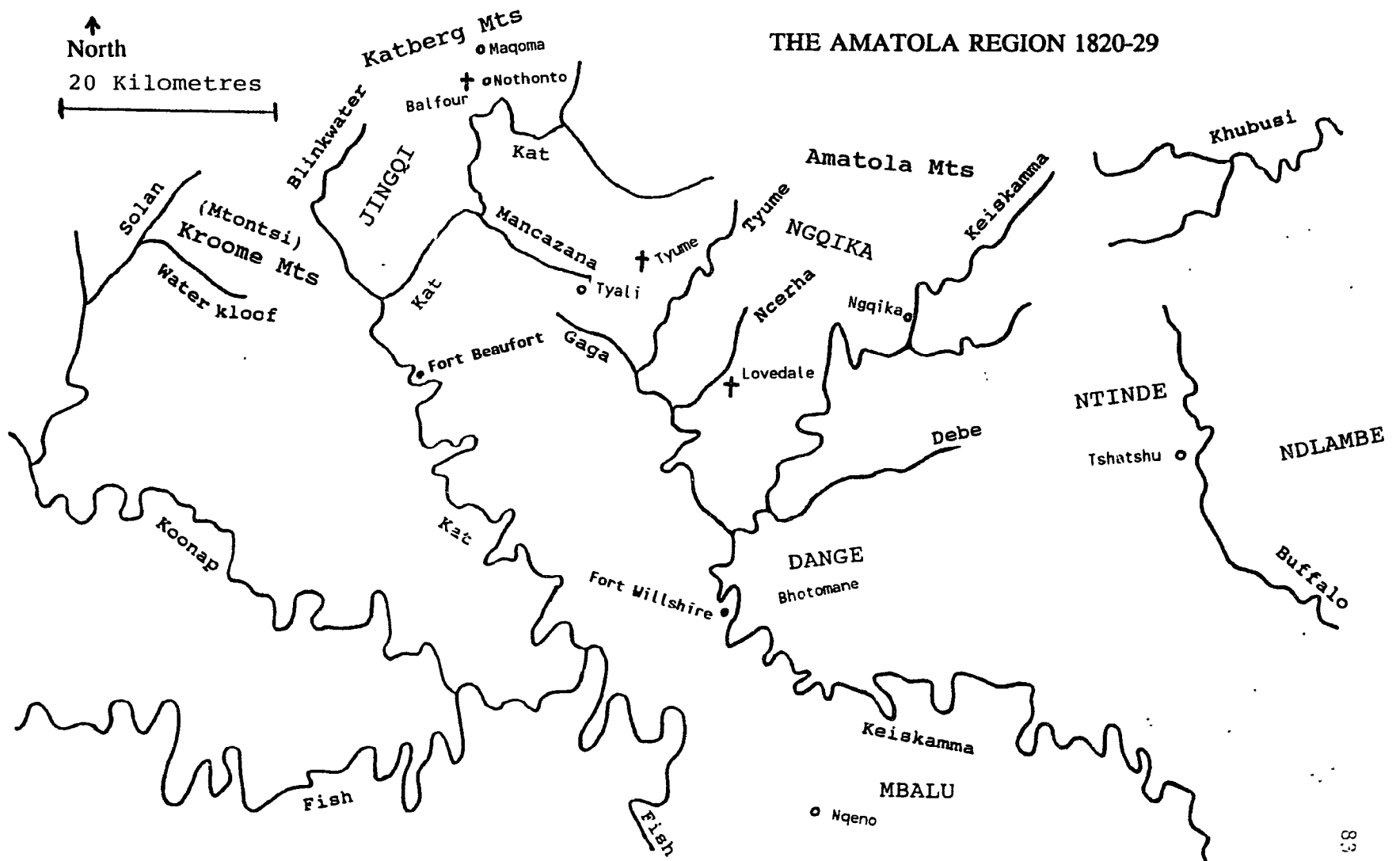
<sup>107</sup>Although Stockenstrom claimed to have given most of the captured cattle to Bowana, within a few weeks that chief had fled back to Vusani. Most likely, he had not been given enough cattle to maintain his patronage system and discovered that the price of European support was the enslavement of his people. In 1830 Bowana was killed by his rival son, Mapassa. See Kruger, The Pear Tree, p. 173.

<sup>108</sup>For the expulsion see Hutton, Stockenstrom, pp. 315-320; (CL) MS 7720, J. Ross to Mother, 6 May 1829; (CL) MS 2637, Helen Ross to Sister, 13 October 1829; (CL) MS 9037, Minutes, Report of Thomson, 4 May 1829; and PP, C.252 of 1835, pp. 32-43, Sir L. Cole to Sir George Murray, 14 June 1829.

the only politically influential missionaries were those who supported colonial dispossession of African land, each missionary seemed to have a different agenda. Essentially, by not asking Ross for advice Jongumsobomvu failed to bring his missionary into the political spectrum. Although Maqoma had developed rudimentary new tactics which were effective against mounted European gunmen, the Jingqi were not yet ready to engage the colony in a protracted war. The chief knew this all too well. Jongumsobomvu blamed both white aggression and Ngqika's collaboration for the 1829 expulsion. Nine years of developing an independent chiefdom had been wasted. Through his attack on the Thembu, Maqoma began to realize the weakness and futility of inter-ethnic conflict. Unity would be the only way for the Xhosa to defend themselves from European intrusion. Tragically, immediate circumstances and personal ambitions made this impossible. Driven back into his father's territory, Jongumsobomvu faced the prospect of fighting a civil war against Ngqika and Tyali, the only way for him to maintain Jingqi autonomy and acquire new land. In fact, the recovery of territory stolen by the colony would preoccupy Maqoma for the rest of his life.







### Chapter Three

#### "The Black Snake That Crosses Rivers"

##### Maqoma's Regency and Reluctant Resistance (1829-35)

A week after our interview with Wati Maqoma, Wonga and I arrived in the Ciskeian capital of Bisho. Sitting in an ultra-modern waiting room in an imposing government building, a secretary served us tea. After fifteen minutes the door to the next office opened and a dozen official looking bureaucrats, dressed in dark business suits, walked out and down the corridor. The secretary invited us into the luxuriously furnished office of Ciskei's Minister of Manpower, Chief Lent Maqoma. Rising from behind his massive desk, Chief Maqoma greeted us with a warm smile and friendly handshake. He was a polished politician. Pleased by the idea of a biography of his famous great great grandfather, the original Maqoma, the minister reclined in his cushioned armchair and agreed to tell the stories which had been handed down by his family. While Chief Maqoma knew many authentic oral traditions, the conversation always seemed to drift back to modern Ciskei politics. Tactfully, he described the incompetence of Namba's descendants, who had been the legitimate heirs to the chieftaincy, and his subsequent installation as ruler of the Jingqi in 1968. When the secretary brought in some coffee, Chief Maqoma depicted how the 1978 discovery of Maqoma's bones on Robben Island and their reburial in Ciskei had increased his popularity and evoked the wrath of the then Ciskeian president, Lennox Sebe, who eventually forced him to flee to Transkei. Satisfied with the four hour interview, but aware of Lent's political motivations and aims, we departed for the rural areas.

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After Maqoma and his followers were expelled from the upper Kat River in May 1829, Andries Stockenström organized a large group of Khoi and mixed-race farmers to take their place. Known as the Kat River Settlement, this westernized community would prevent the Jingqi from re-

occupying the fertile Neutral Zone. There is no doubt that Stockenstrom had conceived this plan prior to evicting Maqoma. Simultaneously, Duncan Campbell, the civil commissioner of Albany who had investigated Jongumsobomvu's attack on the Thembu and recommended his expulsion, obtained permission from the colonial office to begin gradual white settlement in the Neutral Zone.<sup>1</sup>

Suffering from lack of agricultural produce and cattle, Maqoma's subjects erected temporary shelters along the arid banks of the Gaga River.<sup>2</sup> This stream formed the border between the colonial Neutral Zone and Ngqika's kingdom. The situation was inflamed by the intense drought which began in 1829. Throughout Xhosaland crop yields and milk production decreased.<sup>3</sup> Without any means of communicating with the colony and afraid of renewed European attacks, Maqoma sent repeated messages to Balfour asking the Reverend Ross to establish a new mission on the Gaga. In mid-July Ross and Alex McDiarmid, Jongumsobomvu's former missionaries from the Kat, visited the Jingqi. Greeting the missionaries with friendship, the chief invited Ross to search the countryside for a potential site for a new station. However, Ross believed that Maqoma was not prepared to stay in this area and that the people were in a far too "unsettled" state for a mission to be established at this time. As the missionaries left the disappointed chief, they observed famished people digging desperately for edible roots and one of Maqoma's wives asked Ross to look at "how thin she

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<sup>1</sup>For Stockenstrom's recommendation concerning the establishment of the Kat River Settlement see (CA) LG 10, Stockenstrom to Secretary to Government, 30 April 1829; for approval of the plan see (CA) LG 1, Secretary to Government to Stockenstrom, 8 May 1829. For Campbell see PP, C. 252 of 1835, pp. 42-43, Cole to Murray, 14 June 1829.

<sup>2</sup>For Maqoma's location after expulsion from the Kat see (CA) LG 5, J. Bennie to Stockenstrom, 10 November 1829.

<sup>3</sup>(CL) MS 9021, J. Ross to Mother, 25 November 1829.

and the others were".<sup>4</sup> Hungry and frustrated, Jingqi warriors infiltrated the Neutral Zone and rustled cattle from nearby white farmers. Consequently, Colonel Somerset and his settler henchmen, eager to launch another cattle and labour raid against the Xhosa, circulated rumours that Maqoma was rallying the other chiefs for a combined attack on the colony.<sup>5</sup> In reality, within the realm of Xhosa politics Jongumsobomvu was in an extremely tense situation. With Tyali's subjects to the immediate north on the Mancazana River and Ngqika's followers to the east along the Keiskamma, Maqoma was surrounded by enemies.<sup>6</sup> In early September 1829 Governor Sir Lowry Cole visited the Cape's eastern frontier and held a conference with the Xhosa rulers. Although Ngqika and Maqoma did not attend, the other chiefs convinced Cole that none of them were plotting against the colony. Satisfied with the stability of the region, the governor departed for Cape Town.<sup>7</sup> Maqoma was not a threat. No raids were required. Somerset was disappointed.

In September 1829 Ngqika contracted tuberculosis. Vomiting blood, the tortured king aggravated his condition by constant alcohol abuse.<sup>8</sup> The succession dispute began. At Ngqika's Great Place on the Keiskamma his Great Wife, Suthu, cared for the crippled nine year old heir, Sandile. Upon the king's death a regent would have to be installed until this boy reached circumcision age. While Suthu and her lame son had fallen out of favour with the drunken paramount, she had gained support among some of

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<sup>4</sup>For Maqoma's messages see (CL) MS 9037, Minutes, 4 June 1829; for Ross's visit see (CL) MS 9037, Minute, 8 July and 6 August 1829, and (CL) MS 7212, J. Ross to Mother, 10 August 1829.

<sup>5</sup>(CA) LG 4, Somerset to Campbell, 18 August 1829; (CA) CO 366, Somerset to Secretary to Government, 4 September 1829.

<sup>6</sup>For Tyali's location see PP, C.538 of 1836, p. 291, evidence of Colonel Wade, 21 March 1836.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 284-85.

<sup>8</sup>Stephen Kay, Travels and Researches in Kaffraria, (London, 1833), pp. 184-85.

his councillors and Ngqika had not yet married another Great Wife.<sup>9</sup> Shrewdly, Suthu lobbied for the regency. Leading a small faction which wanted to develop Rharhabe influence through close alliance with the colony, Matwa, a twenty year old son of Ngqika, also lived at the Great Place. However, Tyali and Maqoma were the strongest contenders for the regency. As Ngqika's agonizing condition deteriorated, the rivals jockeyed for power by accusing one another's primary supporters of bewitching the king. Hundreds were burned to death.<sup>10</sup> By the first week of November 1829 Maqoma had attempted to protect his followers by moving many of them to the Lovedale mission.<sup>11</sup> He claimed that the pasturage along the Gaga was not sufficient for his cattle. While the chief ordered his subjects to attend church on the Christian sabbath, Nothonto, his mother and confidant, renewed her friendship with Helen Ross.<sup>12</sup> Since his campaign to gain the regency was not going well, Maqoma enlisted John Bennie, a missionary at Lovedale, to write a letter to Stockenstrom stating that:

I was afraid to live on the Gaga, it being a highway for such Kaffirs as steal from the colonists. I have been wandering about since I left the Kat River, and I am tired of being without a resting place. As there is no country behind (east) where I can reside, I have approached the frontier with confidence... My wish is to live in peace and friendship with the colony. I desire to obtain some place in the colony where I may live in alliance with, and subjection to the English.<sup>13</sup>

Maqoma was attempting to enlist the support of the colony against his rivals and gain some land in the well-watered Neutral Zone. While John Ross brought the chief's request before the governor when the later

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<sup>9</sup>Soga, "Imbali Ye Nkosikazi U-Suthu", pp. 94-5.

<sup>10</sup>(CL) MS 9031, J. Ross to Mother, 25 November 1829.

<sup>11</sup>(CL) MS 9037, Minutes, 2 November 1829; and (CL) MS 9023, Presbytery Minutes of R.H.W. Shepard, 2 November 1829.

<sup>12</sup>(CL) MS 7788, H. Ross to Parents, 22 December 1829.

<sup>13</sup>(CA) LG 5, Bennie to Stockenstrom, 10 November 1829.

visited Grahamstown, the missionary met with considerable abuse.<sup>14</sup> Collapsing from a prolonged fit of insane dancing, Ngqika died on the fourteenth of November before Stockenström could reply to Jongumsobomvu's request.<sup>15</sup> By moving to Lovedale and corresponding with the colony Maqoma produced the impression that he enjoyed European support. Lacking missionary assistance, Tyali agreed to negotiate with the Jingqi chief. The two half-brothers, rivals though they were, allied to prevent the incompetent Matwa and unpopular Suthu from seizing power. While Maqoma would act as regent for external affairs, the kingdom was divided between three rulers, Jongumsobomvu, Tyali, and Suthu.<sup>16</sup> In exchange for withdrawing support from Matwa, Suthu gained control of the old Great Place and recognition of Sandile as heir. Fearing the other chiefs, Matwa sent his mother to seek sanctuary with the missionaries at Lovedale.<sup>17</sup> With their heads shaved in mourning for Ngqika, Maqoma and his followers moved south and established permanent kraals along the Tyume. Subsequently, the Jingqi Great Place was constructed near the colonial boundary at the intersection of the Tyume and Keiskamma rivers.<sup>18</sup> The succession crisis was over. Maqoma had been victorious.

There are two oral traditions concerning Maqoma which date to this period. Firstly, sometime in the early 1830's Hintsa had expelled his Great Wife, Nomsa, from his capital. However, Sarhili, Nomsa's son and

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<sup>14</sup>(CL) MS 7788, H. Ross to Parents, 17 April 1830.

<sup>15</sup>(CL) MS 9037, Minutes, 3 December 1829. For Ngqika's dancing see (CL) MS 9021, J. Ross to Mother, 25 November 1829.

<sup>16</sup>(CL) MS 7788, H. Ross to Parents, 22 December 1829.

<sup>17</sup>Matwa's role in the regency conflict was described by Maqoma in "Gaika Chief Macomo in Prison", Cape Argus 30 December 1857. For Matwa's mother see (CL) MS 9021, J. Ross to Mother, 25 November 1829.

<sup>18</sup>Shaving heads was a traditional Xhosa mourning custom, see (CL) MS 7788, H. Ross to Parents, 22 December 1829. For the location of Maqoma's new Great Place see (CA) CO 401, Somerset to Military Secretary, 12 August 1831.

heir to the Gcaleka paramountcy, had reached circumcision age. Since the mother was required to play a role in a portion of this ritual, the prince could not enter manhood. Worried by this situation, Hintsa's councillors invited Maqoma to travel across the Kei and mediate the dispute. Arriving at the Gcaleka Great Place, Jongumsobomvu asked the paramount how his son was ever going to become an adult if his mother was exiled. Since the Rharhabe regent had expressed himself so eloquently, Hintsa allowed Nomsa back into his kraal and sent Sarhili to circumcision school.<sup>19</sup> Secondly, in 1823 the Christian Gqunukhwebe chief Kama had married Nongwane, Maqoma's twin sister, who had also converted to the European religion. However, when Kama's councillors insisted that he take a second wife, the chief appealed to Maqoma for assistance. Jongumsobomvu visited his brother-in-law's kraal and heard the complaints of the councillors. Since Kama could be used to solicit missionary sympathy, Maqoma ruled in his favour and asked the councillors if any of them could challenge their chief's God. Faced with the decision of this powerful regent, Kama's subjects accepted his Christian convictions. Jongumsobomvu may have also supported Kama because he had always shared a close relationship with Nongwane.<sup>20</sup> Both these traditions are presently employed by the Jingqi to illustrate Maqoma's judicial wisdom.

Eastern Cape settlers became determined to further dispossess the Xhosa and seize both their land and labour. In February 1830 twenty-seven

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<sup>19</sup>Interview with Chief L.W. Maqoma. While this informant claims that Ngqika sent Maqoma to solve this dispute, this is unlikely as they were not on friendly terms during the late 1820's. It is more probable that after Maqoma became regent for the entire Rharhabe chiefdom, Hintsa's councillors invited him to mediate the conflict. This tradition can be dated anytime between Maqoma's succession in November 1829 and Sarhili's circumcision in July 1834. However, it is unlikely that the regent left his territory during any of the periods of increased European raiding. For the date of Sarhili's circumcision see (CL) MS 15,429, J. Ayliff to Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, 30 July 1834.

<sup>20</sup>Interview with Mr. W.M. Gqirhana. See also chapter one of this thesis and Yekella, "The Life and Times of Kama".

white farmers requested permission to move into the Neutral Zone.<sup>21</sup> When Stockenstrom authorized the surveying of this area he encouraged the voracious appetite of the settler population.<sup>22</sup> As military commandant of the frontier, Somerset assisted his settler allies by renewing small-scale cattle raids against the Rharhabe. Known as the "patrol system", these operations were conducted under the pretence of recovering colonial stock supposedly stolen by the Xhosa. However, Maqoma and Tyali, in March 1830, foiled these patrols by hiding their women, children, and cattle, and organizing their warriors into strong ambush parties of 400 to 500 men each. This tactic was an adaptation Jongumsobomvu had first conceived when faced with European soldiers in the 1820's. Somerset and his settler friends were frustrated. Larger expeditions would be required. Concurrently, Doctor John Philip, the celebrated humanitarian and superintendent of the London Missionary Society (LMS), visited the Cape's eastern frontier and met Bhotomane and Ngeno. These chiefs complained bitterly about the patrols. Arriving at Lovedale, Philip dined with Maqoma and visited his kraal the following day. The chief described his expulsion from the Kat River and spoke highly of the Reverend Ross who had suffered with him. Impressed by Maqoma's articulate expression, Philip informed the chief that he had been treated unjustly and promised to raise the matter with the governor's superiors in London. Certainly, Jongumsobomvu saw considerable potential in this relationship. In turn, the South African Commercial Advertiser, a liberal Cape Town newspaper edited by Philip's son-in-law, John Fairbairn, published editorials and letters condemning colonial aggression against the Xhosa.<sup>23</sup> Within the eastern Cape the white community became polarized. A small group of

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<sup>21</sup>(CA) LG 7, Colonial Office to Stockenstrom, 4 February 1830.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., Surveyor General to Stockenstrom, ? June 1834.

<sup>23</sup>For the meeting with Maqoma see (CL) MS 7788, H. Ross to Parents, 17 April 1830. For the meeting with the other chiefs and the resultant newspaper editorials see PP, C.538 of 1836, p. 372, evidence of Colonel Wade, 25 April 1836.



humanitarians with missionary connections opposed a large population of expansionist settlers. By 1831 Robert Godlonton, a local entrepreneur and friend of Somerset, launched the Grahamstown Journal as the champion of settler interests.<sup>24</sup> Faced with criticism, the settler faction became committed to the complete conquest of the Xhosa.

Throughout April 1830 Somerset continued to report increased Xhosa depravations along the border. Early in the month the commandant held a conference with the southern chiefs Phato, Kama, and Nqeno to inform them that further cattle theft would lead to expulsion from the land they had managed to re-occupy in the Neutral Zone. Fearing Somerset's military might, the chiefs professed friendship with the colony and promised to prevent future rustling. Despite these assurances, a few weeks later the commandant attacked both Bhotomane and Nqeno and drove their people east over the Keiskamma. Captured stock was given to the settlers.<sup>25</sup> Replying to Maqoma's request made six months earlier, the governor informed Stockenstrom that the Jingqi would not be permitted to re-enter the Neutral Zone and instructed the commissioner-general to expel Tyali from the Mancazana whenever a suitable pretext arose.<sup>26</sup> The Mancazana lay within the very edge of the Neutral Zone. Settler interests were predominant. When Maqoma visited Stockenstrom at the Kat River Settlement in mid-May 1830, the chief's appeal for a location within the colonial border was denied and he was informed that the Rharhabe would soon lose more land.<sup>27</sup> As a result, Jongumsobomvu began to realize the extent to which the Europeans wanted to conquer Xhosa territory.

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<sup>24</sup>A.L. Harington, "The Graham's Town Journal - Its Founding, Early History, and Influence", South African Historical Journal, No. 1, 1969.

<sup>25</sup>(CA) CO 383, Somerset to Wade, 18 April 1830 and Somerset to Wade, 23 April 1830.

<sup>26</sup>(CA) LG 1, Secretary of Government to Stockenstrom, 28 May 1830.

<sup>27</sup>PP, C.538 of 1836, p. 107, Stockenstrom to Secretary to Government, 17 May 1830.

With approval from Cape Town, Somerset launched a concentrated offensive against Tyali's chiefdom. While the soldiers were supposed to recover stolen colonial cattle, the real aim of the operation was to force Tyali east of the Mancazana. On the seventeenth of June 1830 three columns of European and Khoi cavalry entered the chief's territory and scoured the countryside. Hundreds of cattle were seized. Most were not of colonial origin. Attempting to placate Somerset, Tyali offered no resistance and personally escorted the division led by Captain Aitchison. Another column of sixty Boers under Field Commandant P. Erasmus seized a large quantity of stock from the kraal of sub-chief Zeko. Although Zeko and his followers cooperated with the patrol and assisted in driving the confiscated cattle toward Fort Willshire, the Boers shot the sub-chief and six unarmed men. While Erasmus later claimed that Zeko had attacked the column, Stockenström learned from colonial eye-witnesses that the Field Commandant had committed cold-blooded murder. Predictably, Erasmus was never prosecuted. Tyali was outraged. Despite the seizure of over 2000 cattle and the execution of an aristocrat, the chiefdom did not abandon the Mancazana. Throughout this episode Maqoma remained passive.<sup>28</sup> With the Jingqi just starting to recover from the expulsion of 1829 he could not afford an armed confrontation with Somerset. In fact, Jongumsobomvu may have been pleased to see a decrease in the wealth and power of his rival half-brother which served to strengthen the latter's grasp on the regency. Realizing that resistance to European intrusion was inevitable, Maqoma dispatched emissaries across the Kei to inform Hintsa that an aristocrat had been shot and request Gcaleka assistance in an upcoming war with the colony. Eventually, Jongumsobomvu planned to take revenge on the

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<sup>28</sup>pp, C.538 of 1836. p. 38, evidence of Aitchison, 5 August 1835 and Ibid., p. 107 and 115, evidence of Stockenström, 21 August 1835; (CA) LG 2, Thomson to Stockenström, 29 June 1830; Hutton, Stockenström, pp. 393-402; and Pringle, Narrative of a Residence, pp. 325-326.

Europeans.<sup>29</sup>

The settlers would not let Maqoma rest. In March 1831 Duncan Campbell reported large-scale Jingqi cattle rustling from colonial farms. Interestingly, in 1829 Campbell had conducted the official investigation into Maqoma's attack on the Thembu and recommended the chief's expulsion from the Kat River. In turn, the civil commissioner successfully urged the Colonial Office to open the Neutral Zone to gradual white settlement and he personally gained land in the former Jingqi territory. Continuing his hostility toward Jongumsobomvu, Campbell claimed that:

This turbulent chief does not and cannot appreciate the humane policy observed towards the tribes beyond the border but that it only leads him to imagine that he can commit these outrages with impunity.<sup>30</sup>

While the prevailing drought certainly encouraged the Rharhabe to steal settler stock, correspondence from Grahamstown indicates a decrease in Xhosa depredations throughout the first half of 1831.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, it is highly possible that Campbell's report concerning Maqoma was a fabrication and his description of the patrol system as "humane" was certainly ridiculous.

In June Somerset requested permission from the Military Secretary in Cape Town, Colonel Thomas Wade, to launch a major raid against the Rharhabe to recover a number of stolen horses.<sup>32</sup> Hearing rumours of a

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<sup>29</sup>For the messengers to Hintsa see Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, South African Correspondence, MIC/F 137, Fische 74, S. Kay to Secretary, 23 August 1830. For Maqoma's desire for revenge see PP, C.538 of 1836, p. 360, evidence of W. Gisborne, 27 April 1836.

<sup>30</sup>For the quote see (CL) MS 17,042, Cory Notebook, Vol I, p. 151, 4 March 1831; for Campbell's influence on the Colonial Office see PP, C.252 of 1835, pp. 42-3, Cole to Murray, 14 June 1829.

<sup>31</sup>(CA) LG 8, Letters Received From the Civil Commissioner in Grahamstown Re. Stolen Cattle, January - June 1831.

<sup>32</sup>(CA) CO 401, Somerset to Wade, 24 June 1831.

proposed attack on his chiefdom, Maqoma, on the first of July 1831, visited the Reverend James Laing at the new Burnshill mission which was only eight miles from his kraal and within sight of Ngqika's former Great Place. Dressed in a leopard skin kaross and accompanied by several of his wives and warriors, the chief was anxious to know if a commando was being sent against him. Although Laing was impressed by Jongumsobomvu's "attractive appearance", he could not give an informed answer. The following week Maqoma returned to Burnshill and with an apparent "gentleness of manner", requested that a teacher be stationed with him. Over some tea Laing promised his new friend that he would represent this application to the Glasgow Missionary Society.<sup>33</sup> While Maqoma had seen that the presence of a mission would not necessarily prevent a colonial attack, it might reduce its destructiveness.

On the fourteenth of July 1831 Maqoma met Stockenstrom on the Kat River. The chief complained about the murder of Zeko and claimed that lately one of his men had been shot by a patrol searching for cattle. While Stockenstrom promised to investigate the Zeko incident, he told the chief that if the Jingqi man "either stole the cattle, or threw, or threatened to throw assagais at the patrol, he could not expect to be otherwise treated".<sup>34</sup> Following the conference, Maqoma and Tyali attempted to placate Stockenstrom by sending him forty horses. However, since a Khoi herder had been allegedly murdered by two Xhosa during a cattle raid on a white farm, the commissioner-general could not stop Somerset's proposed offensive.<sup>35</sup> By the first week of August 1831 the Cape Mounted Rifles were prepared for an expedition into Xhosaland and

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<sup>33</sup>(CL) MS 16,479, Journal of James Laing, Vol I, 1 July and 7 July 1831.

<sup>34</sup>Hutton, Stockenstrom, pp. 400-401.

<sup>35</sup>PP, C.538 of 1836, p. 110, Stockenstrom to Secretary to Government, 14 July 1831.

Somerset justified his actions by reporting increased rustling along the border.<sup>36</sup> Crossing the Tyume, over a hundred mounted Khoi gunmen approached one of Maqoma's kraals and demanded the murderers and stolen stock. Faced with superior firepower, the headman led the soldiers to one of Bhotomane's villages where a man confessed to the crime and surrendered some cattle. That night Maqoma sent a messenger to Bennie, now at Burnshill, asking him to send a letter to Somerset which would blame the murder on Bhotomane's subjects and prevent a colonial attack on the Jingqi. After the patrol returned to Grahamstown, Somerset praised Jongumsobomvu's followers for their cooperation.<sup>37</sup>

Colonial forces continued to harass the Rharhabe. On the twenty-ninth of August Maqoma travelled to Tyali's Great Place on the upper Tyume to meet Stockenstrom. After the commissioner-general demanded that the chiefs surrender the second murderer, Jongumsobomvu claimed that:

Every exertion is being used to find him.  
I believe the reason Botman (Bhotomane)  
is not here, is because he is engaged in  
that search.<sup>38</sup>

Interrupting the conversation, Tyali produced three of his warriors who had witnessed the murder of Zeko by Erasmus. Stockenstrom seemed disinterested. Tyali continued to complain that forty-six of his cattle had recently been seized by Europeans. Expressing strong dissatisfaction with the patrol system, Maqoma stated that within the past month colonial soldiers had tied one of his people to an ant-hill and administered a severe flogging. Additionally, the regent claimed that the Jingqi man who had been shot had neither stolen cattle, nor thrown, nor threatened to

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<sup>36</sup>(CA) CO 401, Somerset to Wade, 5 August 1831.

<sup>37</sup>For the patrol see (CA) CO 401 and (CA) LG 2, Somerset to Wade, 12 August 1831. For Maqoma's message see (CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, Vol I, 13 August 1831.

<sup>38</sup>Hutton, Stockenstrom, p. 404.

throw an assagai at the patrol which had killed him.<sup>39</sup> Despite these bitter complaints, Stockenstrom refused to alter the colonial border policy. European aggression would continue.

Faced with the disapproval of his superior half-brothers, Matwa's position at the former Great Place became increasingly untenable. Suthu had abandoned him. By September 1831 Matwa and a few remaining followers had moved to the nearby Burnshill mission. Remaining a half mile from Laing's station, the outcast chief constructed a European style house with a large garden around which his subjects built traditional huts. Within a few weeks the pro-colonial chief was selling cattle to settlers and using the revenue to purchase western clothing and other goods from white merchants. Dependent on the missionaries for protection, Matwa and forty-five of his adult subjects regularly attended Laing's church and school. While Maqoma and Tyali were initially pleased to see their despised half-brother leave the old Great Place, they became concerned that his mission community would become a haven for outcasts, non-conformists, and those who desired to collaborate with the whites. Eventually, it might develop into an autonomous Christian chiefdom with powerful colonial support.

When Charles Henry Matshaya, Laing's interpreter and Maqoma's old acquaintance, visited the Jingqi Great Place in November, the regent demanded his own missionary within a year. After selecting a site for a new mission, Matshaya informed his former chief that Matwa was suffering from an unusual illness. A few weeks later Maqoma travelled to Burnshill and investigated his younger half-brother's condition. Indeed, Matwa was plagued by continual headaches and nosebleeds. Maqoma thought this was a perfect opportunity to destabilize the mission chiefdom. Immediately following Jongumsobomvu's visit, Matwa's subjects informed Laing that they

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 404-405, and PP, C.538 of 1836, p. 114, Stockenstrom to Secretary to Government, 31 August 1836.

were afraid of being smelt out as witches. As the young chief's health deteriorated, Maqoma's witch-hunters infiltrated the mission community and began accusing Matwa's most cattle-wealthy supporters of practising sorcery against their sick ruler. With their stock seized by Jongumsobomvu's agents, many of the accused fled to the colony or sought refuge in Laing's home. Although Matwa moved his personal herd to the station and constructed a hut next to the church, the witchdoctors would not permit him to leave his house. Matshaya advised Laing that these doctors were attempting to turn Matwa from Christianity.

In mid-December Maqoma led 150 Jingqi warriors to Burnshill. As a show of force, the regent and ten of his best men rode horses and carried muskets. Within a few days Matwa's most cattle-rich councillor, whom Laing described as a Fingo<sup>40</sup>, was accused of witchcraft and tortured. While this unfortunate individual managed to escape and flee to the colony, Maqoma seized all his stock. Undoubtedly, the confiscated animals included cattle which Matwa had lent his subjects on an increase-sharing basis. As a result, Jongumsobomvu was absorbing a portion of his pro-colonial sibling's royal herd. This reduced Matwa's ability to attract new followers. Realizing that Maqoma intended to destroy the Xhosa community around Burnshill, Matshaya informed Laing that he was afraid the witch-hunters would smell him out and take his cattle. The next day the interpreter began sending his sizable private herd to the Tyume station. A week later, in late December, a witch-finder accused Matshaya of practising sorcery and sentenced him to death by fire. The mission was in chaos. Under cover of darkness, he fled to the Tyume institution with the

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<sup>40</sup>During the 1820's and early 30's Europeans often referred to Xhosa who lived at missions or within the colony as Fingoes. This does not seem to refer to a separate ethnic origin but to detachment from traditional society in favour of the colony. While some Fingoes were willing collaborators, others had been seized by colonial labour raids. Only after the massive forced labour recruitment of the 1835 frontier war was the concept of a separate Fingo ethnicity developed to cover up the illegal origin of these workers. They were supposed to be refugees from Shaka's wars of conquest. See Webster, "Land Expropriation".

remainder of his stock. Independent from chiefly authority and possessing a large personal herd, Matshaya also represented a potential rival to Maqoma. Observing the collapse of his small chiefdom, Matwa abandoned Christianity and ordered his people to stay away from the church and school. Satisfied that the young chief's community was too destabilized to become a powerful adversary, Maqoma and his warriors returned to the Jingqi Great Place. However, Laing failed to understand that Jongumsobomvu had been behind the wave of witchcraft accusations.<sup>41</sup> As his forefathers had done, Maqoma had employed this ritual to maintain his authority and eliminate enemies. Matwa was not smelled out because his illness was the pretext for all the accusations and such an act would set a dangerous precedent which would put other chiefs at risk. Councillors and supporters were the victims. Without these, Matwa was powerless.

During the first half of 1832 colonial aggression against the Xhosa chiefdoms decreased. Responding to rumours of dissatisfaction and possible rebellion in the Kat River Settlement, Somerset temporarily suspended the patrol system and prepared his forces for such an eventuality. However, the commandant's investigation revealed no substantial evidence of hostility within this community.<sup>42</sup> When Somerset learned that his father, a former governor of the Cape, had died, he was granted a leave of absence to travel to England to settle the family estate.<sup>43</sup> Simultaneously, the death of Stockenstrom's only child, an infant son, prompted him to resign as commissioner-general of the eastern frontier and accompany his wife on a tour of Europe.<sup>44</sup> Personal problems pre-occupied the primary architects of colonial expansion and Xhosa

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<sup>41</sup>These three paragraphs are based on (CL) MS 16,579 Journal of Laing 15 October 1831 - 2 January 1832.

<sup>42</sup>(CA) CO 412, Somerset to Secretary to Government, 5 January 1832.

<sup>43</sup>Rivett-Carnac, Hawk's Eye, p. 83.

<sup>44</sup>Hutton, Stockenstrom, pp. 416-17.



dispossession. Unfortunately, others were eager to take their place.

After the destabilization of Matwa's mission chiefdom, Xhosa attendance at the Burnshill church and school declined. Suthu visited the station and informed the young chief that the only safe place for him was at Tyali's kraal on the upper Tyume. Foolishly, Matwa believed that Tyali had not been involved with the wave of witchcraft accusations. Dependent on the support of both Maqoma and Tyali, Suthu thought it best to satisfy her patrons by removing the outcast chief from the mission. She was also concerned that an autonomous Christian chiefdom led by Matwa would threaten her son, Sandile, who was destined to inherit the Rharhabe paramountcy. Suthu kept the twelve year old heir away from neighbouring Burnshill. By the beginning of February 1832 Matwa, with his family and cattle, had moved to Tyali's residence.<sup>45</sup> In this traditional environment the young chief abandoned his westernized customs and dress. Maintaining a close guard over Matwa's family and stock, Tyali ensured that his junior half-brother was a virtual prisoner. While Matwa was free to make brief visits around the country, he could not liberate his cattle from Tyali's enclosure. Without his herd the unhealthy young chief had no hope of attracting followers or maintaining authority in the usual manner.<sup>46</sup> The small group of outcasts living around Burnshill lacked the centralizing force and patronage of a royal leader.

With colonial raids allayed and Matwa emasculated, Maqoma continued his campaign to acquire a personal missionary. In the first week of February 1832 Laing visited the Jingqi Great Place to inquire about the accusation against Charles Henry Matshaya. Jongumsobomvu wanted to appear generous. While Maqoma admitted that some of his subjects had accused

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<sup>45</sup>(CL) MS 16,579 Journal of Laing 25, 26, and 30 January 1832, and 1 February 1832.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 26 June and 10 August 1832.

Matshaya of bewitching Matwa, the regent assured Laing that he had not sanctioned this judgement. In fact, Maqoma stated that since Matshaya was employed by the missionaries, any chief would have to get Laing's permission before punishing the interpreter for any crime. Jongumsobomvu continued by expressing his regret over Charles Henry's flight and told Laing that it was safe for him to return. The regent then declared his intention to protect the Tyume, Lovedale, Pirrie, and Burnshill missions and vowed to talk with the missionaries before seizing any of the Xhosa inhabitants of these institutions. Pleased by the "plain, free, and decided manner in which Maqoma spoke in the whole of Charles Henry's case", Laing rode back to his station and a few days later Matshaya, with his cattle and family, returned to Burnshill.<sup>47</sup>

A week later, in mid-February, Laing returned to the regent's kraal with John Ross, now at the new Pirrie mission, and the Reverend William Chalmers, a recent arrival. These missionaries presented Maqoma with an official petition from the Glasgow Society requesting that he ban all witchcraft executions within Ngqika's old chiefdom. According to Laing, Jongumsobomvu gave the petition "a very favourable reception, and said that it gave him great pain to see people so cruelly used as those fixed on by the doctors. He allowed that the doctors were false accusers". While the regent asked for a missionary to teach him more about this issue, he stalled Laing and the others by claiming that Hintsa, as the senior paramount, was the only chief who could eliminate the smelting out ritual. Confident in Maqoma's support for their proposal, the missionaries left the Jingqi Great Place.<sup>48</sup> In reality, Hintsa exercised no authority over the Rharhabe. Maqoma had both maintained his traditional instrument of coercion and increased his friendship with the

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 2 February 1832; and (CL) MS 9032, Minutes, 5 April 1832.

<sup>48</sup>(CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 17 February 1832; and (CL) MS 9032, Minutes, 5 April 1832.

Glasgow missionaries. Conversely, Tyali's overt hostility to Christianity evoked the condemnation of Laing and provided the settlers with an excuse to demand another attack against his chiefdom.<sup>49</sup>

Maqoma visited Burnshill in both March and May to inquire about his application for a mission. Seeing the benefits of having a white teacher, Nqeno and Bhotomane made similar requests to Laing.<sup>50</sup> Upon taking over as military commandant of the eastern frontier in July 1832, Colonel England re-instated the patrol system and launched an unsuccessful campaign to drive Tyali's subjects east of the Mankazana.<sup>51</sup> In early August Alex McDiarmid, now stationed with Laing, made a series of visits to Jingqi kraals along the Keiskamma and informed Maqoma that he would soon have a separate mission.<sup>52</sup> With the renewal of colonial aggression it became vital for Jongumsobomvu to have a sympathetic European who could negotiate with the settler forces. Simultaneously, Maqoma caught one of his warriors with colonial cattle he had rustled from a white farmer on the Kat River. To placate Colonel England the regent delivered the thief and stock to Fort Willshire.<sup>53</sup> Contrary to later colonial propaganda, Maqoma desired to maintain peace with the colony at nearly any cost.

On the seventh of February 1833 the Reverend Friedrich Gottlob Kayser, a German member of the LMS, and several Khoi attendants arrived at the Jingqi Great Place. Perspiring heavily from the intense heat, the

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<sup>49</sup>(CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 9 February 1832.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 30 March, 1 April, 14 April, and 14 May 1832.

<sup>51</sup>U. Long, An Index to Authors of Unofficial, Privately-Owned Manuscripts Relating to the History of South Africa, 1812 - 1920, (Cape Town, 1947), pp. 81-84, Read to Fairbairn and Chalmers to Stretch, 21 November 1833.

<sup>52</sup>(CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 6 August 1832.

<sup>53</sup>(CL) MS 17,039, Cory Notebook Vol. IV, p. 588, no names, from Fort Willshire, 30 November 1832.

missionary introduced himself to Maqoma and stated that Doctor Philip had instructed him to establish a mission one mile away on a hill overlooking the intersection of the Keiskamma and Debe rivers. Pleased with the fulfilment of his request, Jongumsobomvu greeted Kayser in a friendly manner and promised that when the station was completed he would move his kraal, together with his mother, to that area. Since there was little timber in the vicinity, the missionary and his assistants began the gruelling process of transporting wood by wagon from the Amatola mountains in the north. It would take at least eight months to construct the proposed institution.<sup>54</sup>

Despite his cordial relations with the missionaries, Maqoma retained traditional customs and values. With the drought continuing to hamper agricultural production, a mystical rainmaker known as "Unqatsi"<sup>55</sup>, in early February, began performing ceremonies at Suthu's Great Place. Drawing a large audience of hungry commoners, this religious figure led day after day of singing and dancing and warned the people to stay away from the contaminating influence of the missionaries. The sudden popularity of Nqatsi prompted Maqoma, Bhotomane, Matwa, and Anta to visit Suthu's kraal. Laing was displeased that Jongumsobomvu, his trusted friend, should observe the work of this "idolater". Clearly, the missionaries thought of Nqatsi as a competitor. Gathered at the Rharhabe Great Place, the chiefs asked Maqoma for advice on this issue. The regent responded by warning his subordinate rulers not to anger the missionaries by having too many unruly subjects executed for witchcraft. Maqoma was concerned that the work of Nqatsi would evoke the wrath of the European

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<sup>54</sup>Chris Hummel, (ed), Rev. F.G. Kayser: Journal and Letters, (Cape Town, 1990), p. 91.

<sup>55</sup>This is Laing's spelling of the name. He seems to have added the Xhosa prefix "U" which is used when speaking about another person. Therefore, the name was most likely Nqatsi, or Qatsi. Kayser would later observe a witchhunter known as "Gatzie" which is probably the same individual, see Ibid., p. 141.

teachers who would then abandon their sympathetic attitude and call upon the settler commandos. Coincidentally, the next morning a two-day rain storm swept through the region. While the drought was far from over, Nqatsi's satisfied audience dispersed. Magoma visited the angry Laing and advised him that since the Xhosa respected Christianity, the missionaries should be tolerant of traditional customs. Laing was not impressed.<sup>56</sup>

In early March 1833 Matwa attempted to remove some of his cattle from one of Tyali's kraals but was driven away by a headman who cut the young chief's hand. Although Matwa was a political rival and social outcast, Magoma disapproved of a commoner injuring an aristocrat. Fleeing the Tyume valley, the tragic chief and his mother once again sought protection at Burnshill. Laing urged Matwa to live permanently at the mission and renew his Christian lifestyle. However, the fearful chief requested permission to move into the colony to escape the anger of his senior half-brothers. The missionary promised to approach the colonial authorities on Matwa's behalf. After taking another wife in late March, Magoma visited Burnshill to inquire about his exiled sibling. Following the regent's departure, Matwa made further and more frantic appeals for land in the colony. Laing began to suspect that private animosities, not connected to the young chief's interest in Christianity, were behind Matwa's persecution. A few weeks later in mid-April, Magoma contracted an unidentified illness and two men and a woman were accused of bewitching him. The subsequent torture of the trio was slow and agonizing. The regent recovered immediately. Interestingly, one of these unfortunate individuals was the headman who had wounded Matwa. While Laing believed that Jongumsobomvu was personally opposed to this ritual, the regent was most likely feigning sickness to justify the smelling out of several

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 14 and 15 February 1833; (CL) MS 9037, Minutes, 4 April 1833.

people who had disturbed the status quo.<sup>57</sup> Traditional institutions ensured social control.

At thirty-five years of age, Maqoma began to enjoy colonial alcohol. This had been his father's most detrimental weakness. Beginning in June 1833, Jongumsobomvu was observed on several occasions drunk at the canteen in Fort Beaufort and one episode resulted in a brawl with a white trader. While the British officers openly encouraged this activity as a way to take advantage of the chief, Laing was disappointed with the regent's behaviour. However, Maqoma confined his drinking to the colonial posts and never brought liquor to his kraal.<sup>58</sup> It is likely that the chief was also to loosen the tongues of his colonial drinking partners in order to gain information concerning British plans and military strength.

Intent on driving the Rharhabe further east, Colonel England, in July, denied Matwa permission to settle in the colony and the outcast chief remained at Burnshill.<sup>59</sup> In August Maqoma attempted to prevent European aggression by seizing stolen colonial cattle from one of Tyali's kraals and delivered them to Fort Willshire. Retaliating against the regent, Tyali sent some of his warriors to raid a Jingqi village. While these men were withdrawing north with the captured stock, Maqoma's warriors intercepted them. In the subsequent skirmish ten Jingqi were killed and Tyali's party suffered twenty-three casualties of which thirteen were fatal. However, the thieves managed to escape with their loot.<sup>60</sup> Maqoma was furious. Several weeks later, in mid-September,

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<sup>57</sup>(CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 17, 25, 28, and 29 March 1833 and 12 and 15 April 1833; (CL) MS 9037, Minutes, 4 July 1833.

<sup>58</sup>(CL) MS 16,579 Journal of Laing, 24 June 1833.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., for England's response see 22 July 1833; for England's intention to expel the Xhosa see (CA) CO 422, England to Military Secretary, 29 April 1833.

<sup>60</sup>Grahamstown Journal, 22 August 1833.

Jongumsobomvu visited Suthu to ensure that she continued to support his regency. During this trip Maqoma attended church at Burnshill and Matshaya slaughtered an ox in his honour. This bolstered Laing's fading confidence in the Jingqi chief. Near Jongumsobomvu's Great Place, Kayser had finally assembled all the required timber and was beginning to raise the frame of a European style house. In memory of Kayser's former theology professor in Germany, the new mission was named Knapp's Hill.<sup>61</sup> Since Maqoma maintained close ties with both Suthu and the missionaries, Tyali did not continue his minor conflict with the Jingqi.

In early September 1833 Kayser and Maqoma were invited to Philipton, a mission in the Kat River Settlement near the former Jingqi Great Place, to attend the anniversary celebration of the Auxiliary Mission Society. However, the construction of Knapp's Hill prevented Kayser from attending and Jongumsobomvu was refused a pass to enter the colony. Ignoring the colonial authorities, the regent and a large unarmed retinue rode across the border. Maqoma arrived at Philipton on the evening of the sixth of October and was greeted by James Read Jnr., a teacher and son of a missionary, who invited the chief to stay at his house. Apologizing for forgetting to bring a letter from Kayser which stated the reason for his presence in the colony, Jongumsobomvu said "I am here, but what the consequences will be I do not know". This was a perfect opportunity to gain more sympathy and support from the missionaries. The next day Maqoma shared the stage with the principle members of the society. Impressed by the chief's dignified demeanour, the missionaries and their friends discussed colonial aggression against the Xhosa and passed a resolution "to assist in forwarding their temporal and eternal welfare". Maqoma then addressed the assembly through an interpreter:

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<sup>61</sup>For Maqoma's visit see (CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 16 and 18 September 1833; for Knapp's Hill see Hummel, Kayser, p. 95.

There are no Englishmen at the Kat River;  
there are no Englishmen at Grahamstown; they  
are all in my country with their wives and  
children in perfect safety, while I stand  
before you as a rogue and a vagabond, having  
been obliged to come by stealth.

Turning to his warrior escort, the chief continued:

Ye sons of Rharhabe, I have brought you here  
that you might witness the effect of the Word  
of God on others. These Hottentots were once  
as oppressed and despised as we are, but see  
what the Word of God has done for them. I want  
you to carry your present impressions home with  
you. Go and tell my people what you have seen  
and heard here; for I must see the same things  
in Caffreland as I now witness here.

In expert diplomatic fashion, Maqoma had inspired the admiration and good will of every missionary at the meeting. Later in the day Jongumsobomvu was enjoying dinner with the Read family when a group of Cape Mounted Riflemen rode furiously into the village. The commander of the patrol, an intoxicated Sergeant Sant, demanded that Maqoma leave the colony immediately. Standing outside the Reads' house and surrounded by his missionary companions, the regent informed the soldiers that he would leave as soon as he finished his tea. Infuriated, Sant loaded his musket and pointing it at Maqoma he snarled "damn you, if you move from that spot". While the patrol dismounted to water their horses, Jongumsobomvu was forced, at gunpoint, to stand perfectly still for over an hour. The Reads were disgusted. Waving a flask of brandy under Maqoma's nose, the insidious sergeant taunted "he need not be alarmed, he knows I am an old friend of his". The soldiers laughed. With a look of utter contempt, Maqoma responded that "I will not have your brandy, this is not the first time you have insulted me in this way, but it is the first time you have insulted me in the presence of people, who could bear evidence of the insult". When Sant's men mounted their horses and brought the regent's steed, Maqoma appealed to the Reads:

I cannot go with this man; this man will shoot  
me on the way; I am afraid to go with him. One  
of you missionaries had better accompany me, and  
see what is done to me, for this man will shoot  
me, and then say that I wanted to make my escape.



The patrol, along with Jongumsobomvu and James Read Snr., rode recklessly out of the mission nearly trampling a five year old child. In a few hours Sant's soldiers crossed the colonial border and released their prisoner.<sup>62</sup> From that point on, Magoma became the favourite of most of the missionary community. While the South African Commercial Advertiser condemned colonial oppression of this dignified potential convert, the settlers grew more resentful and determined to dispossess the Rharhabe and their regent. To the expansionist whites, Magoma, who they represented as "one of the most dishonest and drunken Chiefs in Caffraria", became a symbol of "sickly sentimentalism"<sup>63</sup>.

Colonel Wade, the Cape's military secretary and ally of settler interests, had become acting governor in August 1833. By early November Colonel England received orders from Cape Town to protect the colonists by driving Magoma and Tyali further east.<sup>64</sup> Within a few days Captain Aitchison of the Cape Mounted Rifles was instructed to expel the Xhosa from both the Mancazana Valley and the west bank of the Tyume. Having served many years on the eastern frontier, Aitchison knew that since the Xhosa could not harvest until March, an eviction at this time would force them to abandon their half-grown crops while still in the ground. The Rharhabe would certainly resist. Aitchison reported this to Colonel England who instructed him to proceed with the operation. Meeting Magoma and Bhotomane at Fort Willshire, the captain explained that the acting governor had ordered them to withdraw east of the Mancazana and Tyume. Jongumsobomvu became extremely irritated and demanded a specific reason

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<sup>62</sup>The best account of Magoma's arrest at Phillipton is in the South African Commercial Advertiser, 4 December 1833. For other accounts see PP, C.538 of 1836, evidence of Captain Charles Bradford, 28 August 1835, p. 159; Wade, 21 March 1836, pp. 294-5; Wade, 25 April 1836, pp. 418-21; and James Read, 29 June 1836, pp. 593-54 and 597.

<sup>63</sup>Grahamstown Journal, 22 August 1833 and 20 August 1835.

<sup>64</sup>(CL) MS 17,036, Cory Notebook Vol II, Secretary to Government to England, 15 November 1833.

for the removal. When Aitchison admitted that he could not provide a logical explanation, the chiefs refused to leave their land and Maqoma asked "whether or not I have sent in horses and cattle recaptured from other Caffres, which had been stolen from the colony?" The regent continued to state that Aitchison did not command enough soldiers to force all the Rharhabe off the land in question. Worried about the prospect of armed conflict, the captain promised Maqoma that if his people left the designated areas he would represent their case to Colonel Somerset and the new governor who were both to arrive in a few weeks. Also eager to avoid open warfare, Jongumsobomvu accepted Aitchison's terms and within two days the Rharhabe, their maize and melons not yet harvested, withdrew from the entire Mancazana Valley and the west side of the Tyume. Aitchison later described the area these people moved to as having "not a morsel of grass upon it more than there is in this room, it was as bare as a parade". Understandably, Tyali was enraged by the loss of his most fertile area, the Mancazana, and the young Rharhabe warriors urged their chiefs to attack the expansionist colony.<sup>65</sup> Appealing to his missionary friends, Maqoma dictated a passionate letter to Kayser who then sent it to Doctor Philip:

As I and my people have been driven back over the Chumie River without being informed why, I should be glad to know from the government what evil we have done? I was only told that we must retire over the Chumie, but for what reason I was not informed. Both Stockenstrom and Somerset agreed that I and my people should live west of the Chumie, as well as east of it, without being disturbed. When shall I and my people be able to get rest... When my father was living he reigned over the whole land, from the Fish River to the Key... Yet both I and my brother Tyalie have almost no more country for our cattle to live in... I do not know why so many Commandos come into this country and take away our cattle and kill our people, without sufficient reason. We do no injury to the colony, and yet I remain under the foot of the English. I would beg the favour of your inquiring at the government for me, the reason for these things, and I will thank you.

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<sup>65</sup>PP, C.538 of 1836, p. 8, evidence of Aitchison, 31 July 1835.

Your Friend  
MACOMO, The Chief<sup>66</sup>

Subsequently, the letter was published in the South African Commercial Advertiser where it became the focus for considerable criticism of colonial frontier policy. Maqoma hoped that his influential missionary sympathizers could arrange the return of Rharhabe land before the radical elements of his kingdom decided to take up arms.

When Colonel Somerset arrived on the eastern frontier in early January 1834 he was alarmed by the explosive situation. With the Rharhabe driven east over the Tyume, their abandoned crops were being devoured by birds and insects and their cattle were dying of starvation. The ultra-aggressive frontier policy of Wade and England had lacked patience and forethought. Although Somerset was an expansionist, he realized that Maqoma's subjects were prepared to ignore their regent and retaliate against the colony. Immediately, the commandant recommended the relaxation of border restrictions and the new governor, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, approved the plan.<sup>67</sup>

Maqoma had spent the first two weeks of January courting the favour of the Reverend Kayser. The regent and his eight wives became regular visitors at the new institution of Knapp's Hill where the German missionary told them biblical stories with the aid of colourful illustrations. As a result, when Somerset sent a messenger to Kayser to have him tell Maqoma to report to Fort Willshire the next morning, the missionary warned his chief to be cautious and put off the trip for a few days.<sup>68</sup> However, the regent thought it was important to meet the

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<sup>66</sup>South African Commercial Advertiser, 7 December 1833; for Kayser's role see PP, C.538 of 1836, p. 161, evidence of John Philip, 15 June 1836.

<sup>67</sup>(CL) MS 17,036, Cory Notebook Vol II, Somerset to CO, 24 January 1834.

<sup>68</sup>Hummel, Kayser, pp. 95-96.

commandant and he left immediately. Arriving at the fort on the morning of January eighteenth, Jongumsobomvu, Tyali, and their principle councillors and headmen were informed by Somerset that they could graze their cattle west of the Tyume. The colonel added that this was only a temporary measure dependent on the chiefs' "good behaviour" and no gardens or huts were to be constructed. When Tyali asked if his subjects could re-occupy the Mancazana valley he was denied. That area was already earmarked for settler farms. After the chiefs departed, Somerset sent a message to Fort Beaufort to maintain constant patrols along the entire length of the Kat River. He was afraid Maqoma and Tyali might attempt to seize their stolen land.<sup>69</sup> Crossing the Tyume, the Rharhabe discovered that most of their fields had been ruined and their kraals burnt. Fortunately, the royal herds found better pasture and milk production increased slightly.<sup>70</sup> Starvation was allayed.

The most fanatical settlers resented this minor and temporary concession and urged the colonial authorities to re-expel the Xhosa. Hungry for additional land, Duncan Campbell used his position as civil commissioner to champion this cause. Throughout the eastern Cape, white farmers complained of a dramatic increase in stock theft by the Xhosa. Armstrong reported that Tyali was determined to retake the Mancazana by force and claimed that bands of hostile warriors were sighted all along the border. However, as Armstrong was a well known advocate of colonial expansion and had been responsible for Maqoma's expulsion from the upper Kat in 1829, it is highly possible that his accusations were either exaggerations or lies. With their cattle grazing on the west side of the Tyume it was understandable that the herdsman and their families required shelter. As a result, the Rharhabe disobeyed Somerset's restrictions by

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<sup>69</sup>(CL) MS 17,035, Cory Notebook Vol I, Statement of Maqoma to Campbell, 28 February 1834 and Somerset to Major Cox, 7 February 1834.

<sup>70</sup>Hummel, Kayser, p. 97.

constructing huts on the colonial side of that river. Quickly, D'Urban bowed to settler pressure and ordered Somerset to drive the Xhosa east over the Tyume once again. On the first of March 1834 colonial cavalry swept the west bank of the river and evicted Rharhabe who were still attempting to salvage some of their damaged crops. As their huts and fields were burned, the terrorized people fled east with the herds. Maqoma was shocked. His subjects had not been across the Tyume for more than a month. In turn, many Rharhabe called for revenge against the treacherous whites and Kayser was shunned by Jingqi commoners.<sup>71</sup>

Colonial violence intensified. With expansionist settler interests dominating the colonial administration, Somerset launched his most concerted effort to dislodge the Rharhabe from their territory. Complete conquest of all the Xhosa west of the Kei River was beginning to be seen by colonial officials as the only way to meet growing settler demands for land and labour. Throughout May 1834 Somerset's soldiers swept the entire frontier burning any kraals which had crept back into the Neutral Zone, now the "Ceded Territory", where white farmers were rapidly fencing off the land.<sup>72</sup> As usual, Xhosa rustling served as justification for these raids and in mid-June the commandant held a conference with Maqoma, Tyali, Bhotomane, and numerous subordinate chiefs. When Somerset demanded to know why the Xhosa rulers could not prevent their subjects from stealing colonial stock and gave them eight days to provide compensation, Maqoma assured the colonel that he had been successful in curtailing such activities. Preoccupied with the loss of the Mancazana, Tyali said

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<sup>71</sup>For Tyali's reported hostility see (CL) MS 17,035, Cory Notebook Vol I, Armstrong to Somerset, 1 March 1834; for the loss of crops and eviction see PP, C.538 of 1836, p. 10, evidence of Aitchison, 31 July 1835; for Campbell's role see PP, C.538 of 1836, p. 68, evidence of Captain Spiller, 17 August 1835; for huts on the Tyume and hostility to Kayser see Hummel, Kayser, p. 97.

<sup>72</sup>For settlers in the Ceded Territory see (CA) CO 2749, Campbell to Hamilton, 17 September 1834.

nothing to the hated Somerset.<sup>73</sup> In fact, Jongumsobomvu had returned many colonial cattle to Fort Willshire and posted warriors at the drifts along the Keiskamma River to stop rustlers from entering the colony. Determined to placate Somerset, Maqoma seized some cattle and goats from one of Suthu's kraals near the old Great Place and delivered them to the Europeans.<sup>74</sup>

Despite his efforts to maintain peace, some of Maqoma's personal herd were impounded at Fort Willshire for wandering across the colonial boundary. Sharing a few bottles of brandy with the soldiers at the fort, the regent was able to bring his cattle home. While Jongumsobomvu had sent two of his children, a six year old boy and a fourteen year old girl, to live at the Knapp's Hill school, Kayser disapproved of the chief's increasing use of alcohol.<sup>75</sup> At this time Maqoma's subjects had been without sufficient milk for nearly four months and although they started planting new crops in August, many travelled over twenty miles to obtain maize from other chiefdoms.<sup>76</sup> It was a desperate situation. The people wanted revenge.

Maqoma was not the only Rharhabe aristocrat to cooperate with the Europeans in order to avoid armed conflict. In July 1834 two British traders, Stubbs and Bowles, complained to Suthu that one of her headmen, "Kneuka", had seized 100 cattle from their camp in the late Ndlambe's territory. When the traders threatened to bring a colonial commando

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<sup>73</sup>For the raids see MS 17,035, Cory Notebook Vol I, Somerset to Secretary to Government, 28 May 1834; for the meeting see (CL) MS 17,036, Ibid., Vol II, Somerset to Major Dutton, 20 June 1834.

<sup>74</sup>For Maqoma's success at preventing rustling see Hummel, Kayser, p. 98; for the Suthu's kraal see (CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 23 June 1834.

<sup>75</sup>Hummel, Kayser, pp. 99-100.

<sup>76</sup>(CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 21 July and 29 August 1834.

across the border, the queen mother's warriors raided Kneuka's kraal and surrendered 100 of his cattle to Stubbs and Bowles. A few days later Suthu learned that the headman, upon realizing he had captured European owned cattle, had returned the herd in question which consisted originally of only forty head. While Maqoma requested that the traders return the surplus cattle, Bowles refused and claimed that the Xhosa had repeatedly stolen their stock.<sup>77</sup> The traders' fraud had succeeded. Xhosa-European tension mounted.

Maqoma's last chance for a peaceful resolution of the situation rested with his missionary friends. Touring the tumultuous eastern frontier in September 1834, Doctor Philip visited Knapp's Hill and met Jongumsobomvu, Bhotomane, Kama, and Tshatshu. As the chiefs claimed to be doing their best to stop rustling from the colony, smoke from kraals recently burned by patrols rose above the surrounding hills. Philip urged the chiefs to remain passive and emphasized the necessity for their children, particularly Sandile, to attend mission schools. Growing impatient with the irrelevant statements of his self-professed ally, Maqoma said:

Yes, all that you have said is very good, but  
I am shot at every day; my huts are set fire to,  
and I can only sleep with one eye open and the  
other shut. I do not know where my place is, and  
how I can get my children to be instructed.

Concerned by the regent's agitation, Philip departed with an assurance that Governor D'Urban, who he described as a "just man", would soon visit the region and hear the complaints of the chiefs.<sup>78</sup>

Several weeks later, in early October, Somerset held a conference

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<sup>77</sup>PP, C. 538 of 1836, p. 166, evidence of Captain Charles Bradford, 28 August 1835; PP, C.538 of 1836, p. 706, statement of Maqoma, no date, and Bowles to Macoon (Maqoma), 5 September 1834.

<sup>78</sup>PP, C.538 of 1836, pp. 551-52, evidence of Philip, 15 June 1836; Ibid., pp. 570-71, evidence of John Tzatzoe, 22 June 1836.

with Maqoma at Fort Willshire. The commandant had received a message from D'Urban that more settlers were to be moved into the Ceded Territory. In turn, Somerset informed Jongumsobomvu that according to colonial records, the Rharhabe still owed the settlers 400 cattle and seventy horses. the colonel warned that if this stock was not replaced a commando would be sent into Xhosaland to seize an equal number of animals.<sup>79</sup> Shocked, Maqoma knew that at such a critical time he could not repossess 400 cattle from his hungry and fearful subjects. Somerset counted on this and quickly dispatched patrols to burn Rharhabe kraals and fields as far east as the upper Keiskamma. Observing the operations against Tyali's people on the Gaga, Colonel Wade claimed that "the whole country around and before us was in a blaze...the soldiers were busily employed in burning the huts, and driving the Caffres towards the frontier". Hundreds of cattle were captured. Wade then visited Maqoma "who was surely vexed at the work that was going on around us". Pointing in the direction of the Kat River Settlement, Jongumsobomvu asked "when am I to have my country again?" The colonel informed Maqoma that his people were being punished for stealing colonial cattle. In reply, the regent inquired "are there no thieves in the colony?" When Wade claimed that thieves in the colony were hanged, Maqoma glared at the colonel and said "but we are to have the land again!"<sup>80</sup>

On the fifth of November a desperate regent once again met with Doctor Philip near Fort Willshire. After Maqoma described the destructiveness of Somerset's last patrol and swore that he had no colonial stock, Philip reminded him of the importance of peace and that the governor would visit and listen to his grievances. This story was

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<sup>79</sup>For settlers see (CA) LG 9, D'Urban to Somerset, 17 October 1834; for meeting see PP, C.538 of 1836, p. 162, evidence of Captain Bradford, 28 August 1835.

<sup>80</sup>PP, C. 538 of 1836, pp. 314-15, evidence of Wade, 25 March 1836.



becoming tiresome. Directing the doctor's attention to the smouldering remains of several huts, Jongumsobomvu stated that:

These promises we have had for the last 15 years. Things are becoming worse; these huts were set on fire last night, and we were told that tomorrow the patrol is to scour the whole district and drive every Caffre from the west side of the Chumie and Keiskamma at the point of the bayonet.

Philip pleaded with the regent that:

If they drive your people at the point of the bayonet, advise them to go over the Keiskamma peaceably; if they come and take away cattle, suffer them to do it without resistance; if they burn your huts, allow them to do so; if they shoot your men, bear it till the governor comes, and then represent your grievances to him, and I am convinced you will have no occasion to repent of having followed my advice.

While Magoma knew that his subjects had been pushed to the limit of their tolerance, he shook Philip's hand and said "I will try what I can."<sup>81</sup>

Colonial aggression led to Xhosa retaliation. On the second of December 1834 Ensign Sparkes, who Somerset described as a young man with "no experience as an officer, and very little sense"<sup>82</sup>, led a patrol into Tyali's territory. When the soldiers seized the chief's personal herd, the warriors became enraged and followed the patrol. After a short skirmish in which the teenage ensign was wounded in the arm, the patrol was forced to withdraw without the captured cattle.<sup>83</sup> Resistance had been effective. Tyali and his subjects became committed to fight further colonial intrusion. Retaliating for the failed Sparkes patrol, Somerset dispatched Lieutenant Sutton to attack Tyali and take his cattle. On the twelfth of December Sutton's mounted column encountered a group of Tyali's

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 553, evidence of Philip, 15 June 1836.

<sup>82</sup>PP, C.503 of 1837, Copies of Extracts From any Further Despatches, p. 160, Somerset to D'Urban, 12 December 1834.

<sup>83</sup>(CA) A1480, Philip to Buxton, 1 May 1835; Soga, South-Eastern Bantu, p. 172; and C. Brownlee, Reminiscences, "The Old Peach Tree Stump".

people indignantly grazing their cattle in the forbidden Ceded Territory. As the patrol began rounding up the herd they were confronted by angry warriors and in the ensuing fight four Xhosa were shot. Among the casualties was Xhoxho, a junior son of the late Ngqika and favourite half-brother of Magoma, whose head had been grazed by a shotgun blast.<sup>84</sup> While the seriousness of the chief's wound was exaggerated, the Xhosa aristocrats could not tolerate the injury of a member of the royal family. This convinced many chiefs that the only way to protect their cattle, land, and authority was to demonstrate to the colony that they were prepared to fight. Simultaneously, the young warriors threatened to act on their own if the chiefs did nothing. Resistance was inevitable. It is not surprising that when Somerset expelled Nqeno's subjects over the Keiskamma on the twentieth of December, the following day Tyali's warriors crossed the border and raided a Boer farm on the junction of the Kat and Koonap rivers. Stephanus Buys, the owner, was killed defending his stock.<sup>85</sup> Throughout the last days of the year small parties of Rharhabe warriors infiltrated the Ceded Territory and the colony to seize cattle and destroy settler homesteads. Since very few Europeans were killed, the primary aim of the Rharhabe was retributive livestock raiding.<sup>86</sup> Less affected by aggressive colonial intrusion, Phato's and Kama's Gqunukhwebe and Hintsa's Gcaleka refused to participate.

After the wounding of his half-brother Xhoxho, Magoma told his incensed warriors "that the blood of a son of Gaika has been shed and could only be avenged by blood!" In turn, the regent assembled a large number of Jingqi men at his Great Place. Just before the outbreak of

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<sup>84</sup>(CA) A1480, Philip to Buxton, 1 May 1835; and (CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 17 December 1834.

<sup>85</sup>For Nqeno see PP, C.503 of 1837, p. 161, Somerset to D'Urban, 20 December 1834; and (CL) PR 3563, Reminiscences of H.J. Halse, Cory Library.

<sup>86</sup>Webster, "Land Expropriation", p. 78.

hostilities, Jongumsobomvu had employed a man of Khoi extraction from Bhotomane's chiefdom to infiltrate Fort Willshire with orders to set a diversionary fire and open the gate on a pre-arranged signal. He was also to enlist the support of any disgruntled Khoi Cape Mounted Riflemen. While Tyali's men were attacking the Koonap and Kat settlers on the twenty-first, Maqoma sent a message to his agent. That night the chief and his warriors crept close to the fort and under cover of darkness waited for the saboteur to fulfil his assignment. However, by sunrise nothing had happened and in the early morning twilight the Jingqi were exposed and fired on from the fort. Unwilling to attack a fortification with superior firepower, Maqoma wisely withdrew his men to the nearby hills.<sup>87</sup> The plan had failed. Subsequently, the regent dispatched small bands of warriors to cross the colonial border and seize livestock.

Hearing gunfire from Fort Willshire, Kayser left Knapp's Hill and rode furiously to the Jingqi capital. While Jongumsobomvu and his warriors were absent, the aged councillors told the missionary that they were "tired of their present condition, their chiefs had been shot and they kept quiet, but now they would fight". When Kayser requested to see Maqoma the councillors took him to a hill overlooking Fort Willshire. Within a large clump of bush the missionary found Jongumsobomvu sitting in the midst of many armed Jingqi warriors. As tears of anguish streamed down his face, Kayser asked the chief what he was doing. "I am a bushbuck!", responded Maqoma, "For we chiefs are shot like them, and are no more esteemed as chiefs". Angrily, the regent asked Kayser "Have you not heard that one of my brothers has been shot in the head? And we do not know why he has been shot." Reminding Maqoma of his promise to Philip, the missionary begged the chief to return to his kraal and wait passively for the governor's proposed visit. "I have no home", Jongumsobomvu retorted, "the bush is my home". Kayser warned Maqoma that

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<sup>87</sup>Brownlee, Reminiscences, p. 290.

armed resistance would only undermine all the efforts of the missionaries to regain Xhosa land. "Oh no, I did not commence hostilities", said the regent, "great bloodshed will follow, but the fire is burning and I cannot quench it". When Kayser asked if he could approach Somerset on the chief's behalf and sue for peace, Maqoma conferred with his councillors and told the missionary "Yes, you go to Colonel Somerset and tell him you found me here in the bush, because my brother was shot in the head". Grimly, Kayser rode throughout the area but could not locate the commandant. The missionary returned to Knapp's Hill to find an angry mob of Rharhabe murdering a white trader and destroying his possessions. Kayser and his family were terrified. However, within a few days Maqoma visited the mission and informed the teacher that since he could no longer guarantee their safety, a Jingqi councillor would escort the Kayzers to Burnshill. Concurrently, the regent sent a message to Laing that although many farms had been plundered, his institution would be protected. By the last day of the year Kayser and his family had reached Burnshill and radical elements within the Jingqi had burned Knapp's Hill.<sup>88</sup> Excited by their chief's military strike across the colonial boundary, the Jingqi warriors praised Maqoma as "the black snake that crosses rivers".<sup>89</sup>

As Rharhabe raids on the colony continued throughout the first two weeks of January 1835, the Europeans formulated a plan for complete Xhosa dispossession. Colonial officials, primarily Somerset and D'Urban, vastly exaggerated the extent and nature of the Rharhabe attacks. London was informed that thousands of Xhosa warriors had swept across the border seizing all the territory east of Algoa Bay. Furthermore, they portrayed this invasion as having been masterminded by the national paramount,

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<sup>88</sup>Hummel, Kayser, pp. 102-106; South African Commercial Advertiser, 3 June 1853; (CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 24 December 1834.

<sup>89</sup>Rubusana, Zemk Iinkomo, p. 257. In Xhosa praises great chiefs are often referred to as snakes. "Crosses rivers" refers to sending warriors across the colonial boundaries of the Keiskamma and Fish rivers.

Hintsa. Godlonton's Grahamstown Journal described the limited Rharhabe raids as a savage "irruption of the Kaffir hordes" and inflated both the number of Xhosa involved and settler losses. For example, while the Journal claimed that the Ferreira brothers had been attacked by 150 to 400 Rharhabe, Jeremiah Goldswain, a witness, remembered only ten.<sup>90</sup> To produce a realistic impression of a massive Xhosa invasion, Somerset, on the twenty-ninth of December 1834, withdrew the garrisons from Fort Willshire, Kat River Post, Gualana, and Caffer Drift. While the Rharhabe sacked these abandoned posts, they were all re-established within six weeks. Believing their own propaganda, paranoid settlers barricaded themselves in Grahamstown.<sup>91</sup> The perfect conditions had been created to justify a decisive military invasion of Xhosaland. Although the senior Read questioned Hintsa's involvement and did "not fear a general combination against the colony", his reports were ignored. The settler press blamed its missionary adversaries, particularly Philip, for fomenting Xhosa discontent and encouraging the attack. With burgher levies effectively engaging Rharhabe raiding parties, Maqoma, on the first of January, visited Burnshill and had Kayser send a letter to Somerset requesting a negotiated settlement. The chiefs' aim had been to demonstrate their willingness to fight as a way to gain more bargaining power and prevent further colonial aggression. Military defeat of the colony had never been a realistic possibility. However, Campbell, an ardent expansionist, insisted that Somerset reject Maqoma's peace offer as

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<sup>90</sup>For the official reports see G.M. Theal, Documents Relating to the Kaffir War of 1835 (London, 1912), p. 3, D'Urban to T. Spring Rice, 5 January 1835; for Godlonton's propaganda see Grahamstown Journal, 19 January 1835 and U. Long, (ed.), The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain, Vol. 1, (Cape Town, 1946), p. 76. After the war Godlonton wrote The Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, (Grahamstown, 1836), to justify the colonial invasion of Xhosaland in 1835. Subsequently, Godlonton's account, which claimed that the conflict had been initiated by a massive Xhosa invasion of the colony, became a long-accepted orthodoxy of South African history. For a modern orthodox interpretation see Peires, The House of Phalo, pp. 89-94.

<sup>91</sup>Webster, "Land Expropriation", p. 79.

the Europeans had not yet rallied their forces.<sup>92</sup> Jongumsobomvu was completely unprepared for the crushing colonial retaliation which was to follow.

On the sixth of January Colonel Harry Smith, a Waterloo veteran and commander of the British garrison in Cape Town, rode into Grahamstown and assumed command of the frontier. After meeting with Somerset and Campbell, Smith declared martial law over the eastern Cape and began organizing an invasion force. All able-bodied adult male settlers were pressed into service. With the Rharhabe now withdrawing from the colony, mounted patrols raided across the Fish and Keiskamma rivers. The kraals of Tyali and Nqeno were destroyed and the former narrowly escaped capture.<sup>93</sup> Intent on conquering all the land up to the Kei River, Smith rejected peace overtures from both Maqoma and Tyali. Desperate to avoid further warfare, Jongumsobomvu even hinted that he might consider living under British suzerainty.<sup>94</sup> However, this would not satisfy the voracious settler appetite for additional land and labour. With reinforcements arriving from Cape Town, by the end of the month Smith had assembled roughly 1200 armed men in Grahamstown. These included regular British soldiers from the 75th Regiment, 72nd Highlanders, and Royal Artillery, Khoi Cape Mounted Riflemen, auxiliary Khoi mercenaries, and various burgher units.<sup>95</sup>

On the twentieth of January D'Urban arrived to direct the

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<sup>92</sup>For Read see Theal, Documents, p. 20, Philip to D'Urban, 16 January 1835; for the peace proposal see (CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 1 January 1835, and (CA) CO 4381, Campbell to ?, 2 January 1835; and (CA) A519/1, pp. 47-49, Chalmers to Armstrong, 1 January 1835.

<sup>93</sup>Milton, The Edges of War, pp. 111-113.

<sup>94</sup>Theal, Documents, pp. 24 and 31, Smith to D'Urban, 18 January 1835, and D'Urban to Spring Rice, 21 January 1835.

<sup>95</sup>A.L. Harington, Sir Harry Smith: Bungling Hero (Cape Town, 1980), p. 28.

forthcoming campaign personally. Throughout February, Smith weakened the Rharhabe by dispatching patrols which drove them over the Keiskamma, seized 4000 cattle, and captured a number of women and children who were later sent to settler farms. As Magoma and Tyali moved their subjects into the densely forested Amatola mountains, Xhosa ambushes hampered colonial operations and killed twelve soldiers. Predicting a full-scale colonial irruption into his territory, Magoma sent a portion of his herd north to the Black Kei. While the Rharhabe chiefs also sent some of their cattle to Hintsa for protection, the Gcaleka still did not participate in the fighting.<sup>96</sup>

Preparing his forces, D'Urban formulated his plan to invade Rharhabe territory and cross the Kei to attack Hintsa and even the distant Bomvana.<sup>97</sup> With 358 regular cavalry, 1639 burgher cavalry, and 1570 regular infantry now at his disposal, the governor organized four divisions of roughly 800 men each. On the twenty-sixth of March Smith led a strong reconnaissance patrol into the Amatolas and returned with 1200 cattle. Five days later, on the thirty-first, the governor's invasion commenced. Leaving Fort Willshire, the first division, under D'Urban and Smith, marched north-east toward the Amatolas. Camped between Fort Willshire and the coast, Somerset's second division also swept toward the mountains. Led by Major William Cox, the third division left Fort Beaufort and travelled east over the Tyume. Finally, assembled on the northern extremity of the Ceded Territory, the fourth division, consisting entirely of Boers and led by Field Commandant Van Wyk, entered the

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<sup>96</sup>Theal, Documents, for Smith's patrols see Notice by Major Dutton, 16 February 1835, p. 66; for cattle see D'Urban to Van Wyk, 15 February 1835, p. 68, D'Urban to Secretary of State, 19 March 1835, p. 108, and Somerset to D'Urban, 12 April 1835, p. 125.

<sup>97</sup>PP, C.279 of 1836, Cape of Good Hope; Caffre War and the Death of Hintsa, pp. 26-27, D'Urban's Orders, 22 February 1835.

Amatolas from the north.<sup>98</sup> Facing the most significant colonial intrusion up to that time, Maqoma delayed the advance of the converging columns and withdrew his followers into the most inaccessible mountain kloofs. Harassed by small groups of Rharhabe warriors, some of whom had muskets, D'Urban's marauding forces pillaged and burned huts and fields and seized many women and children for service in the colony.<sup>99</sup> In mid-April the governor left the third and fourth divisions to continue ravaging the Amatolas and personally led the first and second over the Kei to confront Hintsa.

By the twentieth of April 1835 D'Urban's expedition had crossed the Kei and established a camp near the Wesleyan mission of Butterworth. Under the guise of punishing Hintsa for encouraging the Rharhabe attack on the colony, the governor declared war on the Gcaleka. With a detachment of 300 cavalymen, Smith scoured the surrounding countryside burning kraals and rounding up thousands of cattle. Simultaneously, 5000 Thembu of Chief Vadana, led by Captain Henry Warden, attacked the Gcaleka and seized 4000 head. Invaded from both west and east, Hintsa and forty retainers rode into D'Urban's camp to negotiate a settlement and were subsequently disarmed and taken prisoner. The paramount was not released until he agreed to surrender 50,000 cattle and 1000 horses and admit responsibility for Rharhabe hostility. In turn, Hintsa sent a message to Maqoma describing his capture and warning the regent not to trust the Europeans. Throughout late April and early May, hundreds of Gcaleka commoners flocked to D'Urban's camp looking for food. In pre-colonial African warfare it was usual for the subjects of the weaker chiefdom to abandon their rulers for the sanctuary of a more powerful invader.

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<sup>98</sup>Webster, "Land Expropriation", p. 100; Milton, The Edges of War, p. 115; and Harington, Sir Harry Smith, p. 33.

<sup>99</sup>For the capture of Rharhabe see Long, The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain, pp. 94-95; and Alexander, Narrative of a Voyage, Vol. 2, (London, 1837), p. 80.



D'Urban's army represented an attractive alternative to any Gcaleka dissatisfied with Hintsa. In exchange for promises of land west of the Kei, these people joined the colonial army. Additionally, Gcaleka outcasts who had lived around the Butterworth mission and many women and children captured by Smith were absorbed by this group. As these collaborators and captives moved west of the Kei, D'Urban and his henchmen informed London that they had emancipated 17,000 Fingoes, former refugees from Shaka, who had been enslaved by Hintsa. Pleased with his success, the governor, on the tenth of May, announced that all the land between the Keiskamma and Kei rivers was annexed by the Cape Colony. Without giving any thought to his plans, D'Urban stated that all the Rharhabe would be expelled from this new province of Queen Adelaide. While accompanying Smith's patrol which was gathering Gcaleka stock, Hintsa, on the twelveth of May, was shot through the head by colonial soldiers who proceeded to cut off the chief's ears as trophies. At the same time, British troops escorted seven hundred Fingoes west of the Kei and settled them near the coast between the Fish and Keiskamma Rivers. This community became known as Fort Peddie. Many other Fingoes were brought into the colony and "apprenticed" to white farms. Returning from Gcalekaland with well in excess of 10,000 cattle, D'Urban's and Smith's expedition joined the other two divisions near the Amatolas.<sup>100</sup>

While D'Urban was waging his war across the Kei, Major Cox and Field Commandant van Wyk continued the campaign against Maqoma and Tyali. The Rharhabe were now well ensconced in their mountain stronghold and colonial operations were hampered by a severe rain storm and nearly impassable terrain. On the third of May Maqoma sent eleven women to Cox's camp on the Buffalo River to request the suspension of hostilities as

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<sup>100</sup>There are several good accounts of D'Urban's campaign against Hintsa, see Milton, The Edges of War, ch 14; Harington, Sir Harry Smith, ch 3; Webster, "Land Expropriation", ch 3 and 4. Webster has been primarily responsible for revealing the colonial myth concerning Fingo identity.

"their cattle were gone" and "the kloofs stink with their dead". Cox gave the principle envoy a red and white handkerchief and a written pass which supposedly assured either Maqoma or Suthu safe passage to the camp. Three days later the same women returned to Cox and said that Jongumsobomvu claimed to have had nothing to do with the conflict and desired a meeting with the governor. Within a week, a Xhosa messenger approached a colonial patrol from a distance and arranged a meeting between Maqoma and Cox at the base of the Amatolas. On the thirteenth of May Lieutenant Garnet, riding a few miles ahead of Cox, met Maqoma, Tyali, and Xhoxho with a few warriors. Attempting to get Jongumsobomvu drunk on a bottle of brandy, Garnet suggested that the discussion should be conducted at the colonial camp. The regent pointed at two emissaries from Hintsa and said "there are the messengers, and I will not go to the camp". As D'Urban had issued orders for Jongumsobomvu to be taken prisoner, this was a wise decision. When Garnet claimed that the governor was going to give the entire country to the Fingoes, Maqoma replied that "he may do that, but I will not give them time to sit anywhere in it". Escorted by two dragoons, Cox arrived and informed the chiefs that D'Urban would only cease operations when the Rharhabe moved east of the Kei. Immediately, Maqoma rejected the proposal and both parties retired.<sup>101</sup> Migrating over the Kei meant abandoning all their remaining land and submitting to Gcaleka domination. Since Jongumsobomvu's great grandfather, Rharhabe, had broken away from the Gcaleka several generations before, it is not surprising that these harsh terms were dismissed so quickly. The war would continue.

Throughout June D'Urban and Smith launched a large scale offensive aimed at engaging the Rharhabe in a decisive battle. The Reverend John Brownlee's LMS station on the Buffalo River became the military headquarters and provincial capital of King William's Town. Hoping to

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<sup>101</sup>Theal, Documents, p. 159, D'Urban to Cox, 13 May 1835; le Cordeur, The Journal of Stretch, pp. 68-76.

maintain the friendship of his colonial masters, Phato sent 1,200 Gqunukhwebe warriors to assist the British. However, the tangled and rugged terrain made it possible for Maqoma and his subjects to elude the cumbersome colonial columns. By the end of the month Smith had altered his tactics. Smaller more mobile patrols of between thirty to one hundred soldiers were sent into the Amatolas to destroy Rharhabe fields and capture hidden herds. To facilitate this scorched earth campaign, Fort Cox was established in the Amatola Basin near Burnshill. Xhosa collaborators, both Gqunukhwebe and so-called Fingoes, and Khoi mercenaries bore the brunt of these exhausting operations. Another blow to the colonial campaign occurred when most of the settler levies had to return to their farms to plant crops for the coming season. This reduced the number of cavalrymen at Smith's disposal. By this time Maqoma had learned of Hintsa's murder and became determined not to become a victim of European treachery. In early June Jongumsco omvu prevented Suthu from bringing Sandile to the colonial camp.<sup>102</sup> Although the British had promised to give the young heir protection and recognition as chief, the regent feared that he would be used as a hostage. Perfecting their ambush techniques, the Rharhabe warriors, on the twenty-fifth of June, surprised a patrol of thirty Khoi mounted riflemen led by Lieutenant Charles Bailie. The colonial soldiers were all slaughtered and buried in a ravine. Although Maqoma had ordered Bailie to be captured and held for diplomatic advantage, he was killed by angry Jingqi warriors who proudly presented the lieutenant's Bible to their regent. Several days before, Bailie's patrol had seized 200 Rharhabe women and children and were returning for more.<sup>103</sup> As groups of Maqoma's and Smith's men stalked each other through

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<sup>102</sup>Theal, Documents, p. 198, D'Urban to Bell, 2 June 1835. (NA) A96, Shepstone Diary, 5 June 1835.

<sup>103</sup>The bible was seen in Maqoma's possession during one of the August peace conferences, see PP, C.538 of 1836, p. 349, evidence of Lieutenant Colonel William Cox, 20 April 1836. For Maqoma's order regarding Bailie see (CA) A519/27, pp. 65-70, Information of Fingo Women, 23 July 1835.

the mountain forests, the last Rharhabe crops and granaries were burned. Maqoma's subjects faced ultimate starvation.

A concerted colonial offensive in early August prevented the Rharhabe from planting new crops and convinced both aristocrats and commoners that immediate peace was essential to future survival.<sup>104</sup> Similarly, with London growing impatient with the expense of war in South Africa, D'Urban ordered his officers to organize a conference with the hostile chiefs. Three Wesleyan missionaries, the Reverends William Boyce, William Shepstone, and Samuel Palmer, were employed to arrange this meeting. In turn, these missionaries sent Maqoma's sisters, Nongwane who had married Kama and another who was a wife of Phato, into the Amatolas with a message for their brother.<sup>105</sup> Throughout this period Rharhabe resistance continued, and on several occasions in mid-August Jongumsobomvu was observed leading ambushes against colonial patrols while riding a white charger. Pushed to the front of the British formations, Fingo collaborators became the victims of these surprise attacks. Xhosa slaughtered Xhosa. Although Rharhabe food supplies were nearly exhausted, Maqoma's men were now utilizing considerably more captured firearms.<sup>106</sup>

On the fourteenth of August one of Cox's patrols captured a Xhosa warrior and sent him to invite the chiefs to peace negotiations. The next morning a Rharhabe headman approached Fort Cox and said that Maqoma and Tyali would only attend such a conference if Captain Warden, diplomatic agent to the Thembu, whom the Xhosa chiefs had known for many years, was present. A few hours later Warden arrived and Rharhabe messengers

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<sup>104</sup>Theal, Documents, p. 293, D'Urban to Smith, 31 July 1835.

<sup>105</sup>le Cordeur, Journal of Stretch, p. 115; Theal, Documents, p. 287, Boyce to D'Urban, 28 July 1835.

<sup>106</sup>le Cordeur, Journal of Stretch, p. 116; Theal, Documents, p. 330, Captain Alexander to Captain Armstrong, 17 August 1835.

informed Cox that the parties would meet at a notably tall tree half way between the post and the mountains. Leaving the camp in the early afternoon, Cox, Warden, and an escort of Khoi and Fingo mercenaries were shocked to be met by a substantial compliment of Rharhabe. At the tree, Maqoma and Tyali stood at the head of nearly 1000 spear-carrying warriors and 300 others sitting on horses and cradling muskets. Jongumsobomvu hoped that this show of force might prevent treachery and intimidate the colonial negotiators. Exchanging salutes, the officers and chiefs sat under the large tree surrounded by a crescent of 120 "fierce-looking" Rharhabe fighters. While Maqoma was dressed in black trousers and a blue jacket and seemed very stern, Tyali wore a traditional leopard-skin kaross and was more relaxed. Both parties agreed to avoid debating the cause of the conflict. Jongumsobomvu stated that:

We have been long tired of this war, all our  
best men are dead, there are no more Caffres  
left. You have had some soldiers killed, but  
our loss has been very great.

Cox and Warden warned the chiefs that unless they surrendered, D'Urban would drive them over the Kei. Continuing, the officers implied that a quick end of hostilities would mean that the Rharhabe could retain their land. "We hope the governor will not oblige us to live beyond the Kei", said Maqoma, "tell him we will obey his orders, and our people shall never steal cattle again from the colony". The regent then condemned the Fingoes for rustling royal stock and requested that these defectors and captives be returned to their chiefdoms. Diplomatically, Cox and Warden said that the governor would have to consider the matter. Presenting the officers with two spears as gifts for D'Urban, Maqoma and Tyali asked to meet the governor and negotiate a settlement. As the two forces withdrew, a few Rharhabe spat and sneered at Cox's Fingo escorts.<sup>107</sup> The peace process had begun.

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<sup>107</sup>le Cordeur, Journal of Stretch, pp. 119-121; Theal, Documents, pp. 323-24, Warden to D'Urban, Memorandum of a Conference With the Caffer Chiefs, 15 August 1835.

With the Rharhabe willing to discuss terms of surrender, D'Urban suspended military operations and sent new instructions to Major Cox. In the last weeks of August Maqoma dispatched repeated messages to the British requesting a conference with the governor. On the seventeenth Jongumsobomvu's mother, Nothonto, and three other women visited Boyce, Shepstone, and Palmer to convey the regent's benevolence toward missionaries. A week later, on the twenty-fourth, Maqoma and a bodyguard of sixty horsemen rode to Fort Cox to hear D'Urban's reply. Jongumsobomvu was greeted by Cox and Warden but since it was nearly sunset, both parties agreed to postpone the meeting until the next morning. Suspecting colonial trickery, Maqoma camped a few miles outside the post and summoned all the Rharhabe warriors in the vicinity. At sunrise Cox, Warden and a few other officers rode out of their post to see 4000 Xhosa footmen forming a long line on a nearby slope. Maqoma, Tyali, Xhoxho, and Anta were guarded by 240 mounted Rharhabe with firearms. Captain Alexander was present and described Maqoma, whom he believed to be "the most daring and active of the chiefs", as "a short thick-set and very Black Kaffir, wearing a blue cloth surcoat and leather trousers... his eyes were very keen, restless and intelligent; his nose depressed; his lips were thick, with lines of debauchery around the mouth and chin". Conversely, Tyali was portrayed as "tall, handsome, and rakish-looking". After the Rharhabe sang a loud war-song, Warden read the governor's new terms. Suthu and Sandile would be surrendered to the British, all firearms and Khoi allies would be given up, and the Rharhabe would move out of the Amatolas to the plain between the mountains' eastern foothills and the west bank of the Kei. While Maqoma listened attentively to D'Urban's letter, the regent responded in a clear and forceful tone:

That is not peace; it would be purchasing peace, and what better should we be? Is that the way of making peace between nations that have been at war? When you proposed at the Goola the other day to terminate the war, you said it was the wish of the Governor to forget the past, and in that paper things gone past are referred to. Besides, what guns do you want, and

what do you want to do with them if there is peace? The Hottentots were born in our country, Sandilla is our chief and we cannot be separated. Besides, our graves are here (pointing at Gaika'); many of our fathers were buried at the Bavians River. That country you now possess. However, with that we are satisfied. But you must allow us to remain where we are.

Jongumsobomvu realized that future Rharhabe autonomy was linked to their continued possession of the Amatolas stronghold. The chief went on to condemn the murder of Hintsa and asked Cox "why have you detained our Fingoes... who in the day of public calamity rose up against us and carried off all my cattle?" When Warden reminded the chiefs that D'Urban would continue military operations if they did not surrender, Maqoma requested that since "I cannot think that your Governor does anything of importance without consulting the officers about him... you must speak a good word for us". The Rharhabe departed without agreeing to the terms. Since the British had settled 2000 Fingoes, many of whom were actually Rharhabe, around the newly constructed Fort Thomson on the Tyume River, it is not surprising that the chiefs rejected these harsh demands.<sup>108</sup>

D'Urban was shocked by the Rharhabe response. Condemning Maqoma "as a remorseless and relentless savage", Smith informed the governor that despite their show of force, the hostile Xhosa were starving and would soon surrender. Although both sides maintained an uneasy truce, the colonel indicated that he was willing to resume operations by sending 300 additional soldiers and a large howitzer to Fort Cox. Simultaneously, Major Cox advised D'Urban to leave Maqoma and his subjects in the Amatolas. Desperate to end the expensive conflict, the governor cancelled all his terms except that the Rharhabe live under British rule and he

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<sup>108</sup>For the description of Maqoma see Alexander, Narrative of a Voyage, Vol. II, pp. 335-350. For the conference see le Cordeur, Journal of Stretch, pp. 123-127. For the Fingo see (CA) 1/AY/8/24, D'Urban to Thomson, Armstrong to Minto, 24 July 1835; (CA) A519/3, p. 73, D'Urban to Fingo Commissioners, no date; (CA) 1/AY/8/24, Fingo Commissioners to D'Urban, 29 August 1835.

ordered Smith to arrange a meeting with the chiefs at Fort Willshire.<sup>109</sup>

Throughout late August and early September 1835, Maqoma and his warriors remained in the neighbourhood of Fort Cox. On the evening of August fifth, Colonel Smith arrived at this post and informed Cox that he was personally demanding that the Rharhabe surrender their firearms and Khoi allies. Additionally, he planned to humiliate the chiefs by making them cry "mercy, mercy, mercy!" Fearing that Smith's megalomania would jeopardize the negotiations, Cox sent a covert message to Maqoma that the governor only required him to accept British dominance and advised the chiefs to concede quietly to Smith's demands as they would soon see D'Urban himself. The next morning Smith, Cox, and Warden, escorted by eight dragoons, met Maqoma, Tyali, Xhoxho, Anta, Ngqono and their councillors at the now familiar tree. Following Cox's counsel, the chiefs sat with the officers and listened passively to the man who they blamed for Hintsas's murder. In an over dramatic fashion, Smith proclaimed:

Children of the Great Gaika! You know when your father died his last words to you were "Be the friends of the English and live with them in peace". You notwithstanding forgot his injunctions and made war with the Governor, who was preparing to come to you with every desire to help and remove the difficulties under which you, Macomo, laboured. Now I am here, and in one hand I hold Peace, in the other War. Choose for yourselves this day whether you will have Peace or still suffer the sorrows of War. The Governor is a good man. He feels for you and your children and will be your father if you obey his word.

Interrupting the speech, Jongumsobomvu shouted "we will be Caffre Englishmen!" After shaking the regent's hand, a pleased Smith read D'Urban's revised terms. However, when the colonel added the surrender of all captured firearms, Maqoma claimed that "as we have suffered so much you should leave them with us, that we might use them against the

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<sup>109</sup>Theal, Documents, pp. 357-360, Smith to D'Urban, 30 August 1835; le Cordeur, Journal of Stretch, pp. 127-128; Theal, Documents, pp. 362-64, Communication from His Britannic Majesty's Governor of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope to the Chiefs Macomo and Tyalie, 1 September 1835.



Governor's enemies and to kill game for our support". As Smith stated that D'Urban would decide the matter, Jongumsobomvu, satisfied with how he had placated the colonel, agreed to comply if required. Suddenly, Smith stood up and signalled the dragoons who fired a thunderous volley into the air. Shocked by this unplanned salute and afraid of white treachery, Maqoma jumped to his feet with an extremely worried expression. After Warden assured the chief that there was no danger, Smith, who had wanted to intimidate the chiefs, chastised the officer for disobeying orders. Warden, in a gentlemanly manner, reminded the colonel that he was acting on the governor's instructions to expedite peace with the Xhosa rulers. Typical of Smith's unpredictable character, he then apologized for such abrupt conduct. While the chiefs were pleased that they would retain the Amatolas, they refused to accompany Smith, whom they called the "King Killer", to Fort Willshire to sign a treaty. Instead, a British hostage was left with the Rharhabe and four councillors were taken to the fort in question to wait for D'Urban. The chiefs would only come when they heard from the councillors that it was safe and the governor was present.<sup>110</sup>

Still camped just outside Fort Cox, Maqoma, on the ninth of September, received word that D'Urban had arrived at Fort Willshire and wanted to see the chiefs. However, a rainstorm prevented the Rharhabe rulers from proceeding immediately to the governor. On the morning of the eleventh, Jongumsobomvu and Tyali, both dressed in the uniforms of Cape Mounted Riflemen, rode to Fort Cox. Major Cox presented Maqoma with a bottle of brandy, which he drank on the spot, and a new black hat. Tyali received a military forage cap. Admiring his gift in the mirror, Tyali commented comically that "Macomo looks like a Boer; I look like an officer". That afternoon the two Rharhabe rulers along with Bhotomane's son, old Ngeno, and many councillors rode to Fort Willshire where they dined with D'Urban. The next day the governor informed the chiefs that

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<sup>110</sup>le Cordeur, Journal of Stretch, pp. 130-133.

the treaty would not be final unless all their subjects were west of the Tyume. Returning to the Amatolas, the chiefs ordered all their people to withdraw from the Ceded Territory. In a few days they rode back to Fort Willshire where on the seventeenth of September a treaty was signed. Within the province of Queen Adeliade, the chiefs would rule their subjects as magistrates under the supervision of four white commissioners. While Maqoma was appointed Chief Magistrate and given a large gold medal and chain to wear around his neck as a symbol of office, Colonel Smith would be the omnipotent Chief Commissioner. The Fingoes were separated from chiefly authority and given special British protection. Although firearms and colonial deserters were to be surrendered eventually, the wording was so vague that the chiefs thought they could put it off indefinitely. Similarly, while the treaty banned witchcraft executions, it was obvious that four white officials could not effectively enforce the regulation.<sup>111</sup> By submitting to weak colonial hegemony, Maqoma's chiefdom could begin planting for the coming season and renew cattle-breeding.

Despite his capitulation in September 1835 and the ravaged state of the Rharhabe, Maqoma was now at the height of his personal power. A significant quantity of loyal veteran warriors, many of whom possessed firearms and horses, and colonial recognition ensured that Jongumsobomvu remained the dominant Xhosa ruler west of the Kei. Hampered by colonial raids and expulsions since the 1820's, the regent, in late 1834, was forced to show the Europeans that he was capable of effective resistance. Although Maqoma had attempted continually to maintain peace, increased colonial aggression resulted in the wounding of an aristocrat and threats from young warriors that they would retaliate unilaterally. Furthermore, the seizure of Xhosa for labour in the colony and the desertion of others to mission stations threatened to depopulate Maqoma's chiefdom and a chief did not exist without followers. Chiefly control of Xhosa society seemed

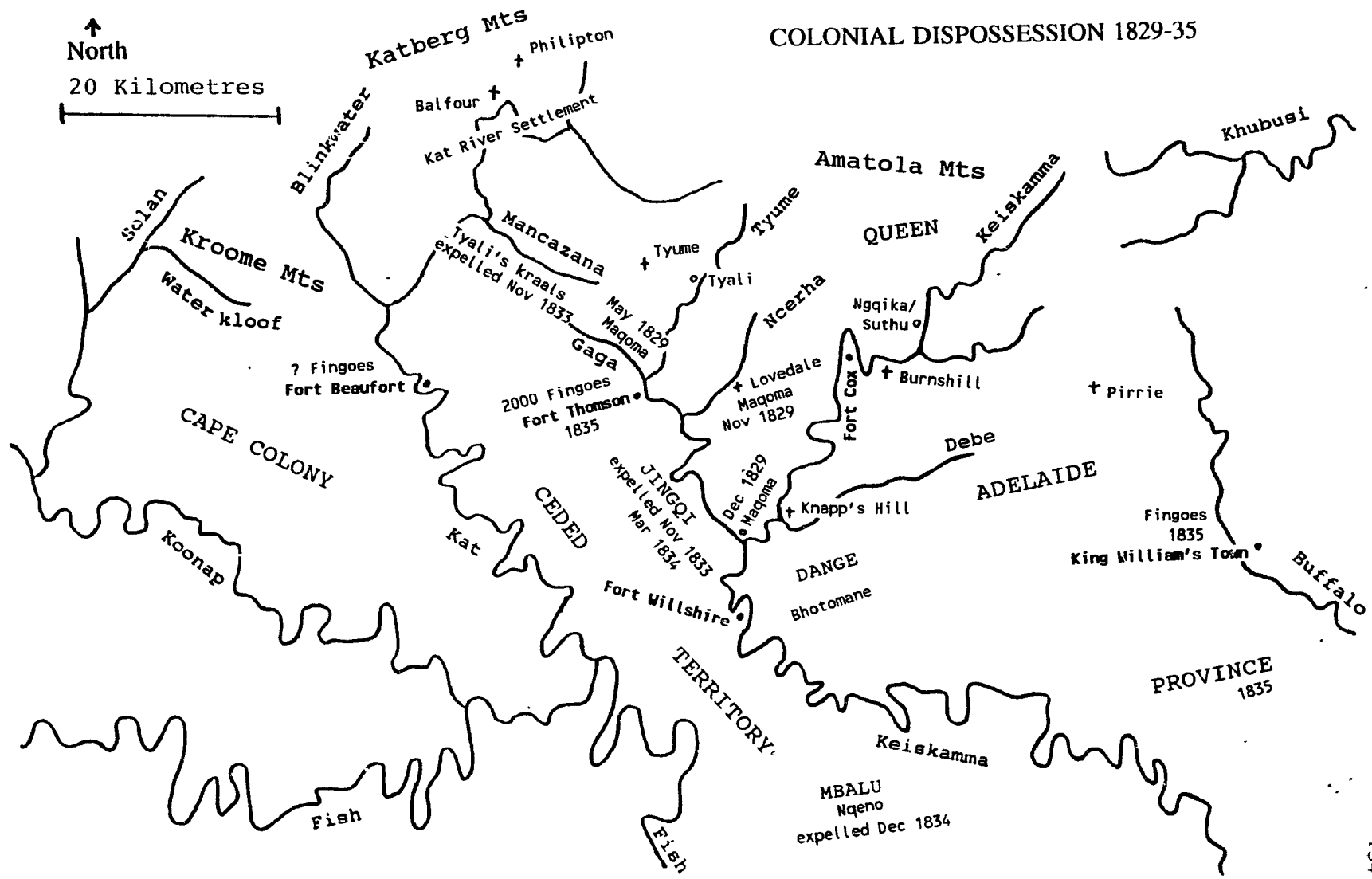
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<sup>111</sup>Ibid., pp. 134-138.

to be in jeopardy. Maqoma felt that limited resistance might eliminate this disturbing trend but he could not have foreseen the massive colonial onslaught and labour recruitment which would follow. Realizing that his missionary friends were powerless to influence colonial policy, Jongumsobomvu had little choice but to sanction limited attacks on the Europeans. His aim was never the military defeat of the colony but simply the prevention of further European raids.

During the subsequent and unexpected British invasion of his country, the regent distinguished himself as a prudent and innovative tactician. Faced with an overwhelmingly superior enemy, the chief responded sensibly by utilizing the Amatolas to conceal his cattle and subjects. Avoiding open battles which would favour the Europeans, Maqoma used this mountainous and forested area to perfect his favourite tactic, the ambush. Because the expense of maintaining military operations against the Xhosa was becoming unpopular in London, D'Urban sought to end the war. In subsequent peace conferences with British officials Jongumsobomvu proved to be a clever and shrewd negotiator. Realizing that D'Urban was not prepared to renew an already protracted conflict, the regent refused to accept colonial terms which violated his fundamental interests. By withdrawing from negotiations at a critical period he reduced the governor's harsh demands to simple British suzerainty. Aristocratic control over Xhosa commoners, cattle, and land was maintained. The only serious threat to traditional authority after the 1835 settlement were the Fingo camps. Hundreds of Xhosa entered these communities to avoid war-induced hunger or escape chiefly exploitation. Once the commoners had seen that resistance was useless and likely to bring only the sacrifice of their lives, the temptation to Fingo-ize must have become strong. Maqoma was unsure about how to deal with this aggravated crisis which imperiled his chiefdom.

COLONIAL DISPOSSESSION 1829-35



## Chapter Four

### "War Does Not Make Us Rich": Magoma's Decline (1836-47)

It was another hot and dusty day in the Ciskei. Just outside the small town of Alice, near Fort Hare University, we had located the closest living relative of the original Magoma, a great granddaughter named Tanzana Mali. Sitting in her armchair, the seventy-seven year old woman asked why we wanted to know the history of Jongumsobomvu. After we explained the project she became anxious, refused to have anything to do with us and claimed that "My great grandfather was a slave!" Her fear was obvious. Fortunately, one of her middle-aged grandsons, a large and friendly man who sported an ANC T-shirt, informed her that we did not work for the government and that it was about time the true story of Magoma was written in the history books. Almost instantly Mrs. Mali relaxed and proceeded to relate stories which she remembered from her late father. Referring to the recent past, she said that "people were too scared to record the history, even to talk about it." After claiming that Jongumsobomvu had been shot on Robben Island, Mrs. Mali continued to tell us that he was not buried in the right place because "he should be at Balfour where he hide himself." With a raised voice for emphasis, our elderly host stated firmly that "Magoma was a man! He would keep his word. If he said he would fight he would do so, he would go out with his army." Undoubtedly, the Jingqi people of Ciskei remember Jongumsobomvu as a great chief and military hero.

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In late September 1835 Magoma, as regent of the Rharhabe, became one of the first Bantu-speaking African rulers to fall under the domination of a European colonial state. Returning to his duties in Cape Town, Governor D'Urban left the autocratic and egotistical Colonel Smith in control of Queen Adelaide Province. Although the British would administer the Xhosa indirectly through the existing chiefs, D'Urban and

Smith planned gradually to eliminate the power of the traditional rulers. Missionaries returned to their former stations, most of which had been abandoned during the War of 1835, and were encouraged by Smith to begin "civilizing" the Xhosa through Christianity, education, and agricultural instruction. While the process of westernization was supposed eventually to distance the Xhosa commoners from their chiefs, a more immediate and significant attack on traditional authority involved the ban on witchcraft executions enforced by Smith's army of occupation. Enemies of the chiefs could no longer be liquidated or even intimidated legitimately. The real but hidden aim of Queen Adelaide Province involved providing a steady supply of African workers for white farmers in the colony. Influential chiefs could and probably would impede this activity. To facilitate labour recruitment Fingo reserves were established throughout the conquered territory. Collaborators and captives from Hintsa's chiefdom who had been brought across the Kei were not the only inhabitants of these camps. By August 1835 several thousand Rharhabe deserters and prisoners had been gathered around Smith's capital of King William's Town on the Buffalo River and the newly-constructed Fort Thomson on the upper Tyume. The latter reserve lay directly on Magoma's western boundary. Throughout the remainder of 1835 and the beginning of 1836 Smith's soldiers burned 2,700 huts and forced hundreds of additional Xhosa into these camps or labour reserves where they were redesignated as Fingoes and sent into the colony to work on European farms.<sup>1</sup> D'Urban's system was an early, and highly coercive, form of migrant labour. Fingoization meant the beginning of proletarianization.

Despite his status as chief magistrate over the other Xhosa rulers

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<sup>1</sup>For the character of Harry Smith and his administration of Queen Adelaide Province see Harrington, Sir Harry Smith, ch. IV. For the Fingoes see Alan Webster, "Unmasking the Fingo: The War of 1835 Revisited", Seminar Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, September 1991, pp. 27-32. For the burning of huts see MacMillan, Bantu, Boer and Briton, p. 142.

in the province, Maqoma's Rharhabe kingdom lay in ruins. In the first week of January 1836 the Reverend Kayser visited Jongumsobomvu's Great Place at the junction of the Keiskamma and Tyume to inform the chief that he would re-establish his LMS station in the area. According to the missionary:

Great slaughter and destruction have followed in Kaffirland. The finest valleys and rich pastures which were formerly numbered (sic) with kraals and cattle are now empty and wholly (sic) without them. Very scarcity (sic) are cattle. And the Kafferr (sic) are now very much seeking work to get only food.<sup>2</sup>

With the colonial seizure of cattle and destruction of crops, many hungry and hopeless Rharhabe commoners deserted their traditional rulers and flocked to the Fingo camps where the Europeans provided goats, seed corn, and farming implements. By July 1836 there would be over 2,014 Fingoes - formerly Rharhabe and Gcaleka - living around Fort Thomson in sixty-seven separate hamlets. Abandoning the pastoral economy of the chiefs, Fingoes who had not been moved to the colony as labourers became peasant farmers. Both men and women tended the fields and by 1837 began selling maize to the settlers.<sup>3</sup> This represented another, and most serious threat to the authority of the traditional aristocrats. It was essential for Maqoma to rebuild his chiefdom so that no more subjects would defect to the peasantization of the colonial labour reservoir around Fort Thomson.

To prevent further depredation Maqoma cooperated with Colonel Smith and the commissioner to the Rharhabe, Charles Lennox Stretch, stationed at Fort Cox. A shrewd judge of character, the regent became an expert at manipulating the bombastic colonel. At every one of Smith's many self-glorifying and highly theatrical ceremonies with the chiefs, Jongumsobomvu kissed the chief commissioner's hand and referred to him as "inkosi

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<sup>2</sup>Hummel, Kayser, pp. 127-128.

<sup>3</sup>(CA) CO 4381, Fingo Commissioners' Letters 21 August to 21 November 1835. Alan Webster, "Unmasking the Fingo", pp. 30-31.

enkhulu" (or great chief). Flattered and fooled, Smith told his wife that "I like Maqoma. He is a very sensible shrewd fellow with a heart, and for a savage, wonderfully clever".<sup>4</sup> The regent's obsequiousness allowed his subjects to plant their crops without further colonial interference. Following Maqoma's example, Tyali, who had always been hostile to missionaries, donned fine European clothing and began attending church.<sup>5</sup> Eight days after the signing of the treaty with D'Urban, Smith summoned the chiefs to Fort Cox and confirmed that they generally would occupy the same areas in which they had lived before the war. While Maqoma, Tyali, and Suthu each still administered roughly a third of the late Ngqika's kingdom, Matwa was brought back from the colony to lead a small group of 2,000 pro-colonial Rharhabe. To Suthu's satisfaction, Sandile, now around fifteen, was recognized as the legitimate heir to the late Ngqika's paramountcy.<sup>6</sup> Although the chief commissioner loudly chastised Maqoma for not surrendering the firearms demanded by the governor, Jongumsobomvu simply prostrated himself before the blustery colonel and gained two significant land concessions. Despite D'Urban's order that no Xhosa be allowed west of the Keiskamma, Smith gave Maqoma a triangular peninsula formed by the intersection of the Keiskamma and Debe rivers and grazing rights west of the new colonial border. Subsequently, the chief commissioner advised D'Urban that the Rharhabe regent could be "gained forever to our interest if properly managed". Angered by Smith's credulity, the governor ordered him to cancel the second concession and expel Maqoma's herds east over the Keiskamma.<sup>7</sup> Several months later

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<sup>4</sup>J. Lehmann, Remember That You Are an Englishman (London, 1977), p. 186.

<sup>5</sup>For planting (CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 7 October 1835; for Tyali see (CL) MS 17,049, Cory Notebook, Vol. 9, Stretch to D'Urban, 21 February 1836.

<sup>6</sup>(CA) LG 604, Gaika Census of 1836.

<sup>7</sup>Harrington, Sir Harry Smith, pp. 56-57. (CL) MS 17,042, Cory Notebook, Vol. 4, Smith to D'Urban, 27 September 1835.



Jongumsobomvu, once again betrayed by the promise of a white man, saw British soldiers driving his cattle back into arid and grassless Queen Adelaide Province. In December 1835 Nothonto's cattle wandered over the boundary and were seized by a colonial patrol. This caused considerable excitement among the Jingqi population. After all, Nothonto was the mother of the chiefdom. With starving subjects entering the Fingo labour recruitment camps around Fort Thomson and royal cattle being captured by the European occupation forces, the Rharhabe chiefs feared losing all their power to the British.<sup>8</sup> Maqoma felt compelled to act decisively.

Sometime in either late 1835 or early 1836 Maqoma quietly dispatched three trusted Jingqi headmen with 600 warriors north to the distant Orange River.<sup>9</sup> These included his best men. Although the evidence appears vague, this detachment was obviously under orders to capture large herds of cattle from Sotho-speaking people. They would replenish the depleted Rharhabe stocks. Maqoma also had instructed the headmen to reconnoitre for a suitable new location, away from the Europeans, to which his chiefdom could migrate. The plot envisioned a Xhosa trek. To avoid suspicion the regent, in January 1836, appointed two Jingqi councillors and Sonto, Chief Ngqeno's son who had joined Maqoma during the last war, as colonial field cornets. Attempting to convince Stretch of his loyalty, Jongumsobomvu described his new policemen as:

men on whom I can rely, they are willing and able to assist me and like myself are desirous of living in terms of strict friendship with His Majesty's government. I can confide in their word and from whom I shall receive every assistance in forwarding the commands of our Governor.<sup>10</sup>

Nothing could have been further from the truth. Angered by the withdrawal

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<sup>8</sup>(CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 14 December 1835 and 18 February 1836.

<sup>9</sup>(CA) LG 604, Gaika Census of 1836.

<sup>10</sup>(CA) LG 604, Stretch to Smith, 6 January 1836.

of his grazing rights west of the Keiskamma, Maqoma told his followers that "The bull cannot eat. When he puts down his head to graze, he is seized by force of arms. Let us go away to another country where we can do so in safety". While Stretch reported in February 1836 that the regent was restless, Smith remained confident in his favourite chief. However, in early April one of Stretch's Xhosa informants discovered the plan and the chief commissioner summoned Maqoma and the other Rharhabe rulers to his capital. After delivering a furious reprimand, Smith warned the regent not to attempt to lead his people out of the province. To avoid the colonel's wrath, both Tyali and Suthu denied ever having supported the plot.<sup>11</sup> Having received reports from his detached headmen that the presence of mounted Griqua slave-raiders and Boer trekkers in Transorangia would make a northward migration impractical, Jongumsobomvu grovelled in front of the chief commissioner and swore loyalty to Britain.

News of D'Urban's annexation was not greeted happily in London. Within the Colonial Office a group concerned with the abuse of aboriginal people in the empire had taken control. Both the Colonial Secretary, Charles Grant otherwise known as Lord Glenelg, and permanent Under-Secretary, James Stephen, were members of the evangelical wing of the Anglican Church, influenced heavily by humanitarian sentiments. In London many eye-witnesses from South Africa, such as Dr. John Philip and Andries Stockenström, presented evidence at the House of Commons Select Committee on Aborigines which sat from 1836 to 37. It was revealed that the so-called Xhosa irruption into the Cape Colony had been exaggerated greatly and provoked by years of European aggression. D'Urban's claim of a sudden and unjustified "Kaffir" invasion in December 1834 was discredited. Rumours of Hintsa's murder and mutilation by Smith's soldiers fuelled the flames of imperial discontent with local policy in Cape Town.

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<sup>11</sup>For Maqoma's restlessness see (CL) MS 17,049, Cory Notebook, Vol. X, Stretch to D'Urban, 21 February 1836. For the meeting with Smith see (SAL) MSB 142, Smith to D'Urban, 10 April 1836.

Furthermore, at this time the Colonial Office was not anxious to incur large expenditures by subduing numerous African chiefdoms. The Cape was only valued as a strategic post on the sea route to India. An extensive empire in South Africa was neither desirable nor desired. Consequently, in late December 1835 Glenelg sent a letter to D'Urban informing him that Queen Adelaide Province should be returned to independent Xhosa control and in February 1836 he dispatched Stockenström, now the lieutenant governor of the eastern districts, to supervise the retrocession. In March D'Urban and Smith received their orders. Both were infuriated.<sup>12</sup> Their personal and adventurous empire-building had come to an abrupt halt.

Foiled in his plan to escape colonial rule through migration, Jongumsobomvu became frustrated but remained in close contact with the Europeans. By March 1836 the Reverend Kayser, who thought of himself as playing the biblical role of the apostle Paul attempting to convert King Agrippa of Syria, a role he assigned Maqoma, had rebuilt his mission, renamed Knapp's Hope, within a twenty minute ride from the Jingqi Great Place. As before the war, Jongumsobomvu received the missionary with hospitality and often sent some of his wives to visit the station. In this way the chief gained considerable information on European aims and activities. From either Stretch or Kayser or both, Maqoma, in early April, learned that D'Urban and Smith would soon be forced to withdraw their army of occupation from Xhosaland. While the settlers of Grahamstown reacted to the Glenelg Dispatch with hostility and resentful condemnation, the Rharhabe regent hosted a four-week celebration at his kraal. Several royal cattle were slaughtered. With his old friend and mentor Chief Ngeno of the Mbalu, Maqoma revelled in the feasting and dancing. Predictably, Kayser hurried to the Great Place to warn the

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<sup>12</sup>W.P. Morrel, British Colonial Policy in the Mid-Victorian Age (Oxford, 1969). Galbraith, Reluctant Empire, ch. 7. J.G. Pretorius, "The British Humanitarians and the Cape Eastern Frontier, 1834-36", Ph.D. Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1970.

regent about the evils of such pagan rituals. He was ignored.<sup>13</sup> Although the country was suffering from drought, the Xhosa aristocrats joyously realized that they would be spared Smith's goal of diminishing or even eliminating traditional authority.

With independence imminent, Maqoma spent the relatively wet winter months of June to August quietly rebuilding his devastated chiefdom. There seemed no further need to challenge the doomed colonial state. Learning from both Laing and Kayser that his former acquaintance, John Philip, had been instrumental in the change of British policy, Jongumsobomvu maintained cordial relations with the white missionaries. Philip's role reinforced the regent's belief that some of these unusual European teachers could prove to be useful allies against the expansionist settlers and officers. As Kayser did not see conversion as integrally linked to conquest, he did not regret the retrocession and appreciated the assistance promised by Stockenstrom. As a result, Maqoma and his wives continued their periodic visits to Knapp's Hope and sent some of the children from their kraal to school at the station. Kayser was particularly pleased by the chief's cooperation in digging a water furrow to irrigate the fields of the Great Place and his desire to have personal reading lessons in Xhosa. One of Maqoma's daughters who had been at Kayser's school before the War of 1835 renewed her interest in western education and began assisting her father by drafting letters to Stretch whom the chief also visited on a regular basis.<sup>14</sup> As Rharhabe society stabilized, fewer people were attracted to the Fingo labour camps.

By late August 1836 Stockenstrom had returned to the eastern Cape and Maqoma saw the possibility of regaining the stolen Kat River Valley.

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<sup>13</sup>Hummel, Kayser, pp. 129-130.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 133-136 and 151.

However, the regent was disturbed by rumours from the missionaries that the colonial Khoi settlement on the Kat would not be dismantled.<sup>15</sup> Realizing that their dream of a massive Xhosa labour reserve was not to be fulfilled, the Grahamstown settlers, whose voice was represented by Robert Godlonton's journal, received the new lieutenant governor, a veteran of several frontier wars, with the disdain reserved for a traitor. Undaunted, Stockenstrom, on the thirteenth of September, assembled all the conquered chiefs, many missionaries and colonial officials at Smith's capital of King William's Town. Glenelg's orders were final. Colonel Smith addressed the assembly and proclaimed regretfully that he would be returning immediately to Cape Town. Maqoma and many other Xhosa chiefs believed that he had been found guilty of Hintsa's murder and dismissed. Stockenstrom cancelled martial law but did not mention the expected retrocession. Seeing this as the first step in what seemed to be a slow British withdrawal from his country, Jongumsobomvu complained about the decline of chiefly power under the D'Urban-Smith system and requested the return of all his former territory west of the Tyume and Keiskamma. His emphasis on the Tyume indicated that he wanted the new lieutenant governor to repatriate all the Fingoes around Fort Thomson. Additionally, Tyali demanded the legalization of witchcraft executions. Admitting that the D'Urban treaties were flawed, Stockenstrom avoided a direct response to the chiefs' aggressive queries. Aware of the continued and immediate presence of colonial soldiers in the area, Maqoma feigned regret at the departure of the hated Colonel Smith.<sup>16</sup> Although Jongumsobomvu despised Stockenstrom for the Kat River expulsion of 1829, he knew the lieutenant governor was less gullible and more capable than the outgoing chief commissioner. As Maqoma rode away to his kraal he realized that caution

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<sup>15</sup>(CL) MS 2637, Helen Ross to Father, 24 August 1836.

<sup>16</sup>For the meeting see Hutton, Stockenstrom, Vol. II, pp. 66-67. For the Xhosa belief that Smith was dismissed see Bowker, Speeches, Letters and Important Papers, p. 24.

and careful diplomacy were now more important than ever. Retrocession would not be automatic.

Despite the lieutenant governor's refusal to address Maqoma's and Tyali's questions, as the colonial soldiers withdrew, all authority returned to the chiefs. Colonial laws meant nothing. A wave of witchcraft executions swept through the Rharhabe chiefdoms as Maqoma and the other aristocrats re-affirmed their previously threatened powers. At Burnshill, close to Suthu's kraal, the Reverend Laing observed chiefs confiscating cattle - either arbitrarily or through smelling out - from village headmen and homestead heads who had been disloyal during the occupation.<sup>17</sup> Devotion to the chief had always been the requirement for a commoner to obtain royal cattle on loan. This would elevate him above the agricultural masses. With the colonial occupation and subsequent decay of chiefly authority, many commoners had attempted to convert their loan cattle into private herds. After the sudden withdrawal of the British, the traditional rulers repossessed their stock from these collaborators and redistributed the herds to other commoners who had proven more loyal. This radically restructured the middle strata of Rharhabe society.

The popularity of the missions dwindled. Tyali discarded his European clothing and never returned to church. Maqoma's visits to Knapp's Hope became less frequent as the regent relied on his primary witch-hunter and rainmaker, the influential "Gatzie", to remind his subjects of the hegemony of traditional practices which supported chiefly rule. Those who had collaborated with the Europeans were smelled out and burned to death. In turn, attendance at the neighbouring mission decreased and Kayser became dissatisfied with Jongumsobomvu's supposed

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<sup>17</sup>(CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 7 November 1836 and 24 January 1837.

progress toward conversion. On one occasion the missionary became angry when Maqoma fell asleep during a sermon.<sup>18</sup>

Throughout October and November Stockenstrom toured the Xhosa chiefdoms and supervised the withdrawal of British garrisons from the new forts within Queen Adelaide Province. In formulating his system for colonial relations with the Xhosa, the lieutenant governor was particularly concerned with the fate of the Fingo reserves which were all located in territory Glenelg had ear-marked for decolonization. As a settler, Stockenstrom knew the value of these camps as sources of cheap African labour but could not use that excuse to justify their continued existence. However, since officials in London had long been under the false impression that the Fingoes were refugees from Natal who had been enslaved by the Gcaleka, philanthropic reasons could be employed to maintain part of the embryonic migrant labour system. Stockenstrom began to think that while he would have to dismantle the camps within Xhosaland, London would accept the retention of those on the colonial border as buffers between settlers and independent Xhosa.<sup>19</sup> This became a recipe for future friction.

During the first week of December 1836 Stockenstrom met with Maqoma and Tyali, Suthu, Botomane, and Nqeno at King William's Town. While all the colonial officials and chiefs greeted one another by shaking hands, Jongumsobomvu refused to do so and attempted unsuccessfully to have John Mitford Bowker, a notorious settler expansionist and Fingo recruiter, barred from the conference.<sup>20</sup> After three days of preliminary discussion, the chiefs agreed not to take revenge on either the Gqunukhwebe, who had collaborated during the colonial invasion, or the

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<sup>18</sup>Hummel, Kayser, pp. 137-139.

<sup>19</sup>Hutton, Stockenstrom, Vol. II, ch. XXII.

<sup>20</sup>Bowker, Speeches, Letters and Important Papers, p. 11.

Fingoes. In turn, the lieutenant governor presented a draft treaty which renounced all British control over the land between the Keiskamma and Kei rivers. The chiefs were absolved of their allegiance. While the old Ceded Territory between the Fish and Keiskamma would remain a part of the colony, the Xhosa were permitted to reoccupy it on the condition that they would never again go to war with the British. Although the Khoi settlement on the upper Kat would remain forbidden to the Rharhabe, Maqoma realized that he could reclaim all his stolen land up to the east bank of the lower Kat. Pleased with the return of their independence and land, all the chiefs thanked Stockenstrom and agreed to meet again in a few weeks to arrange the detailed border regulations and discuss the Fingo issue.<sup>21</sup>

Immediately, Maqoma's subjects began moving their kraals west across the Keiskamma. Throughout late December 1836 and all of January 1837 the regent personally directed the movement of his royal herd into the former Neutral Zone where he established a large cattle kraal. Simultaneously, Jongumsobomvu attempted to maintain his friendship with Kayser, who had become angry at the activities of "Gatzie", by sending the witch-hunter away. Visiting Knapp's Hope, Maqoma pointed west across the Keiskamma and told the missionary that:

I make in that direction a cattle place and  
shall sometimes go there and stop for hunting.  
I do not leave the place here. This place remains  
my home and my mother comes down to it after  
the harvest. If I am not here, then you will  
care for my children.

To further appease Kayser, Jongumsobomvu despatched the elderly councillor who had guided the missionary to safety at Burnshill during the last war, to live at the station as his representative. Additionally, the regent sent his youngest son, two year old Imfazwe, whose name signified "war" because he was born during the colonial invasion of 1835, to be raised by

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<sup>21</sup>Hutton, Stockenstrom, pp. 110-111. (CA) LG 602, Gaika Treaty, 5 December 1836.



the Kayser family. Unlike the teenaged daughter who simply attended school at Knapp's Hope, Maqoma actually gave this young child to the missionary. Similarly, a few months later Jongumsobomvu sent another slightly older son, Makrexana, to be adopted and educated by Charles Stretch.<sup>22</sup> Although he had acquired independence from the Europeans, the Jingqi chief thought that the missionaries and agents could still be valuable and sympathetic mediums of communication with the powerful colony and might prevent future aggression.

On the thirteenth of February Maqoma and the other rulers returned to King William's Town and ratified their treaty with Stockenström. By this time nearly all the colonial occupation troops had withdrawn over the Fish. All the details were finalized. Under the new border system colonists and Xhosa could not enter each other's territory without a pass from a recognized agent. Stretch, who moved his residence from the abandoned Fort Cox to a house near Block Drift on the Tyume, became the Cape's diplomatic agent to the Rharhabe. To facilitate this system the Rharhabe were expected to place kraals at regular intervals along the lower Kat River. The headmen of these villages would be responsible for preventing Xhosa from entering the colony. White traders operating within Xhosaland were ordered to obtain permission from a chief and were subject to African law. Missionaries were given an assurance of British protection. Forts within the old Ceded Territory remained occupied but patrolling for stolen stock was forbidden. The Fingoes still around King William's Town and Fort Thomson were granted protection until they could

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<sup>22</sup>For the movement west of the Keiskamma see (CA) LG 396, Stretch to Houghan Hudson (Agent General), 10 January 1836; for the cattle place and Kayser see Hummel, Kayser, pp. 140-143. While there is no subsequent information on Imfazwe, he might be Ned Maqoma who was one of Jongumsobomvu's sons who served as an interpreter in the native hospital of Doctor J. Fitzgerald during 1856-57. At this time Imfazwe would have been in his early twenties which seems to correspond with Ned's age. For Makrexana (spelled "Marexina" in European correspondence) see (CL) MS 6286, R. Niven to Stretch, 24 August 1837. Makrexana's great grandson, Lent Maqoma, is the current Jingqi paramount and Ciskei's Minister of Manpower, see interview with Chief Lent Maqoma.

reap their crops and move to new locations either within the colony or around Fort Peddie in the southern part of the former Neutral Zone. These Fingo reserves were to become buffers against any future Xhosa invasion of the colony and were placed under direct British protection.<sup>23</sup> In reality, their purpose continued to be to provide a reliable source of African labour for the colonial farmers. White Fingo commissioners would provide passes for the people to enter the colony.

Maqoma spent the first half of 1837 organizing the new Rharhabe kraals west of the Keiskamma and Tyume. Crops were sowed and harvested, granaries filled, and cattle milked and tended. Despite arid conditions, the chiefdom was beginning to recover slowly from the colonial invasion of two years before. A mass initiation of young men in March prompted Suthu's councillors to ask Jongumsobomvu when Sandile, now around seventeen, would be circumcised.<sup>24</sup> Since this would mean surrendering the paramountcy to a crippled teenager, Maqoma delayed the heir's passage into manhood. In June Governor D'Urban confirmed Stockenstrom's treaties and sent Jongumsobomvu a small golden seal to symbolize his status as an independent ruler. This was an ironic gift from the man who had directed the invasion of Xhosaland in early 1835.<sup>25</sup> Interestingly, there is absolutely no indication that Maqoma drank any alcohol during this period. In fact, his complaint to Stretch that white traders were selling brandy to the Xhosa became instrumental in a colonial ban on the sale of alcohol over the border.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Hutton, Stockenstrom, pp. 114-117.

<sup>24</sup>(CA) LG 397, Stretch to Hudson, 1 May 1837; and Hummel, Kayser, pp. 143-144.

<sup>25</sup>(CL) MS 14,641, A.W. Burton, "Macomo's Seal: A Relic of Great Historic Interest Made of Gold", no date. The seal is currently on display in the Kaffrarian Museum, King William's Town.

<sup>26</sup>(CA) LG 396, Stretch to Hudson, 10 January 1837.

By early August the Fingoes around the now deserted Fort Thomson had reaped their fields and were expected to withdraw south-west to Peddie. However, these former Rharhabe and Gcaleka did not want to abandon their land on the Tyume. Making matters worse was the fact that the Fingoes, during their defection in 1835, had taken a considerable quantity of chiefly cattle into the colonial camps. Rharhabe sub-chiefs and headmen began raiding the Fingo hamlets around Fort Thomson. Many people and cattle were reincorporated into the chiefdom. The British-appointed Fingo chiefs, previously commoners, led counter-raids and appealed to Stretch for the promised colonial protection. As their situation became increasingly untenable, the Fingo leaders demanded land in the Kat River Settlement. About 1,800 Fingoes, many of whom were initially Gcaleka, returned to traditional life within Maqoma's dominion. Those of Rharhabe origin were less willing to risk retaliation by their former chiefs. On one occasion Maqoma had been compelled to stop some of his warriors from pursuing a large group of Fingoes who were being escorted by Captain de Lancy across the colonial border to a labour camp at Fort Beaufort. Around the same time Siyolo, a young Ndlambe chief, led 700 of his and Nqeno's warriors in an attack on the Fingoes of Fort Peddie. Although the presence of a British garrison discouraged an overwhelming assault, Siyolo's men seized a significant number of cattle. Xhosa-Fingo violence escalated. Referring to the Fort Peddie incident, Jongumsobomvu told Stretch that:

The same thing will happen here soon for the Fingoes will not submit to the Gaika chiefs since the colonials who were their friends, have made them strong. First they owned me as their Chief and now they refuse to do so...their master must come and fetch them away as they are quarrelling with the Kaffirs and prevent them looking for the spoor of thieves at the drifts.

Unwilling to reduce their supply of migrant labour by granting the remaining Tyume Fingoes farm land in the fertile Kat River Settlement, colonial officials arranged for their movement to Peddie. By the end of August Maqoma and some of his warriors had assisted British soldiers under

Lieutenant Colonel England in driving 1,200 Fort Thomson Fingoes southward. Stockenstrom and Stretch praised the regent for his cooperation.<sup>27</sup> In reality, Jongumsobomvu was eager to stop the internecine warfare by expelling the most recalcitrant Fingo collaborators. This also removed any temptation for other dissatisfied Rharhabe to escape traditional society by moving to the Fingo reserve with cattle on loan from the chiefs. Many Rharhabe headmen re-established their kraals on the banks of the upper Tyume. The threat of Fort Thomson had been eliminated.

Throughout the rest of 1837 and all of 1838 Maqoma, despite false settler rumours that he was preparing to attack the colony, administered the Stockenstrom border system with good faith and effectiveness. On many occasions Stretch praised the regent for his cooperation and zeal in returning stolen colonial stock. In fact, Maqoma even permitted a group of settlers to cross the boundary and take timber from abandoned Fort Thomson. Developing respect and trust for the Rharhabe regent, Stretch assured his superiors that Maqoma was not plotting against the colony.<sup>28</sup> With an eye on his former land in the Kat River Settlement, Jongumsobomvu established his cattle kraal ten kilometres north of Fort Beaufort at the junction of the Kat and Blinkwater rivers. From this location the chief could see the Khoi farms on his stolen territory around the Balfour mission. Maqoma knew that if Stockenstrom's treaty failed there would be a return to the depravations of the colonial patrol system. Consequently, the regent was forced to live primarily at his kraal on the Blinkwater. In this way he kept constantly informed about who was crossing the border

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<sup>27</sup>(CL) MS 17,043, Cory Notebook, Vol. V, pp. 476-506, Stockenstrom to D'Urban, 9 August 1837; enclosure no. 3 from C.L. Stretch, 7 August 1837 with statement of the Chief Maqoma; and Stockenstrom to D'Urban, 23 August 1837.

<sup>28</sup>(CA) LG 397, Stretch to Hudson, 11 April, 1 May, 15 May, 30 May, and 5 December 1837. (CA) LG 600, Diary of Charles Lennox Stretch (Diplomatic Agent), entries from 29 August 1837 to 9 October 1839.

and could communicate quickly with the colony.

Diligently supervising the boundary regulations, Jongumsobomvu began spending a considerable amount of time at Fort Beaufort discussing frontier issues with the officers of the British garrison. During these conversations the whites always encouraged Maqoma to share a bottle of brandy. They hoped to exploit the chief's only known weakness. However, Maqoma realized this and although he did not stop drinking at the fort, he never brought alcohol back to his home. It is also possible that the chief hoped to use alcohol to gain favour and information from the officers.<sup>29</sup> In Jongumsobomvu's absence Nothonto administered the Jingqi Great Place and maintained cordial relations with Kayser. Concerned that the regent's distance from Knapp's Hope would impede his eventual conversion to Christianity, the German missionary approached the Jingqi Queen Mother about her son's consumption of brandy. Responding wisely, Nothonto claimed that "I had spoken to him, but he has not yet heard me; try you again to speak to him about it - however God only can help him from it".<sup>30</sup> Since Kayser was an extremely rigid and staunch Protestant minister who saw dancing as Satanic, his criticism of Maqoma's drinking does not mean that this habit was out of control. Throughout the late 1830's, Stretch, who was in constant contact with the regent, did not write anything about Jongumsobomvu consuming alcohol.

Falsely accused by Godlonton's Grahamstown faction of murdering several non-combatant Xhosa during a commando in 1819, Stockenstrom, in late 1838, resigned from office and returned to London. The subsequent appointment of Colonel John Hare, a professional soldier, as lieutenant governor of the eastern districts worried Maqoma and the other chiefs.

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<sup>29</sup>For both paragraphs see A.W. Cole, The Cape and the Kafirs, (London, 1852), p. 181.

<sup>30</sup>Hummel, Kayser, pp. 153-154.

Fearing a renewal of the aggressive patrol system, Jongumsobomvu visited Stretch to inquire about the rumour of Stockenstrom's departure and ask why the chiefs had not been informed. The diplomatic agent assured Maqoma that the new governor, Sir George Napier, would maintain the existing treaty.<sup>31</sup> Gathering at Stretch's residence on the Tyume, the Ngqika chiefs, on the fourth of May, met Governor Napier and Colonel Hare. After the British officials swore to continue the Glenelg system, Maqoma, speaking with "great force and pertinacity", complained that the Kat River Settlement had not been returned to his control. That evening the chiefs dined with Napier and his entourage. A European observer noted that "Macomo is of shorter stature than the generality of the Caffers, with a very keen, shrewd, intelligent countenance, though he is said, unfortunately for himself, to be excessively addicted to drinking".<sup>32</sup> Once again, the reference to alcoholism is based on rumour and contradicted by what the witness actually observed.

In the middle of December 1838 Hare arranged a meeting with the Rharhabe regent at Fort Beaufort. The new lieutenant governor, under orders from both Cape Town and London to uphold the stability of the frontier, desired to mediate a dispute between Nqeno and Phato over some cattle. The British thought correctly that the Gqunukhwebe were being punished for their collaboration in 1835. Previously, Colonel Hare had sent Jongumsobomvu a horse "to put him in good humour". Besides Maqoma and Stretch, Tyali, Botomane, Botomane's son and Nqeno's councillors attended the conference. The regent assured Hare that while he had no knowledge of Nqeno's demand for cattle from the Gqunukhwebe, it was not in violation of the treaty. The British had no jurisdiction. The Xhosa were independent. To appease the lieutenant governor, Maqoma promised that he

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<sup>31</sup>(CA) LG 398, Stretch to Hudson, 17 December 1838.

<sup>32</sup>Charles J.F. Bunbury, Journal of a Residence at the Cape of Good Hope, (London, 1848), pp. 154-159. Emphasis added.

would prevent violence between Nqeno and Phato. Impressed by Jongumsobomvu, Hare wrote to the governor that "I believe Macomo to be an honourable fellow, and if he should make a separate treaty with us, I am sure he will endeavour to put a stop to the plunder of cattle by his people." What the colonel did not realize was that the Rharhabe regent had little influence over Nqeno's Mbalu which had been an autonomous chiefdom for several generations. Although Maqoma would have liked to see Phato suffer for his collaboration with the Europeans in the last war, the Jingqi chief had little choice but to placate the powerful colony by forcing the Mbalu to reduce their demands. By the beginning of 1839 the British had persuaded Phato to send a few cattle to Nqeno and the dispute fizzled out.<sup>33</sup> Resentful of continued British interference in their internal affairs, the Rharhabe chiefs sent a message to Stretch which affirmed:

their determination to resist armed parties coming into their country for the recovery of cattle and horses, as was the practice under Colonel Somerset's administration of the frontier which they will consider as a declaration of war on the part of the government.<sup>34</sup>

A return to the patrol system, with its constant seizure of Xhosa cattle and people, was entirely unacceptable.

Spending considerably more time in Fort Beaufort, Maqoma learned a great deal about the colonial military, social, and legal systems. He was no longer dependent on missionaries and officials for information. Over a few glasses of brandy at the local canteen the regent conversed and interacted with low ranking British and Khoi soldiers and European civilians who lived around the post. On several occasions Maqoma employed

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<sup>33</sup>(CA) A1415(77), Napier Papers, Vol. III, Hare to Napier, 6 and 13 December 1838; and Hare to Napier, 11 January 1838.

<sup>34</sup>(CA) LG 398, Stretch to Hudson, 6 January 1839.

the services of a white medical doctor.<sup>35</sup> During one of the chief's trips to the fort in late 1838, Andrew Quinn, a twenty-six year old Irish carpenter and notorious rogue, stole Jongumsobomvu's horse. Fearing that this would jeopardize his developing relations with Maqoma, Hare arranged for a Grahamstown lawyer, Henry Collingwood Selby, to represent the regent and bring the thief to court. For Jongumsobomvu this was an interesting opportunity to test the fairness of the colonial judicial process with regard to Africans. On the seventh of January 1839 Jongumsobomvu travelled to Grahamstown for the first time. Calling Stretch and many white soldiers before the resident magistrate to testify on Maqoma's behalf, Selby presented an impressive case. Quinn was found guilty and instructed to pay Jongumsobomvu ten pounds sterling for the horse, which the Irishman claimed not to have, and thirty-five pounds in damages.<sup>36</sup> The chief was delighted. He had employed a colonial institution to redress a grievance against a European. Considering the message received by Stretch that the chiefs would go to war if any patrols ventured across the border, Hare, who had been kept informed on the issue, seemed pleased with the outcome as it contributed to cordial relations with Maqoma and his subjects.<sup>37</sup>

To many settlers who were angry that Napier and Hare did not abandon the Stockenstrom system, Maqoma's legal victory over Quinn seemed to represent the worst aspect of the Glenelg treaty. How could a "savage kaffir" bring a "civilized" white man to court? Throughout April and May 1839 Godlonton's Grahamstown Journal published several disturbing reports

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<sup>35</sup>(CA) A1415(77), Napier Papers, Vol. III, Hare to Napier, 21 December 1838.

<sup>36</sup>(CA) LG 456, Kaffir Papers: File Relating to the Case of Maqoma vs. Quinn, Court of the Resident Magistrate, Grahamstown, 7 January 1839. For Hare's role see (CA) A1415(77), Napier Papers, Vol. 2, Hare to Napier, 28 September and 9 November 1838.

<sup>37</sup>A1415(77) Napier Papers Vol. III, Undated note signed by Hare.



and letters concerning Maqoma. According to Mr. D. McMaster and G. Devenish, both farmers on former Rharhabe land along the Mancazana River, Jongumsobomvu had obtained a pass from the commander of Fort Beaufort, Colonel Greave, to enter the colony in March in pursuit of a group of "Mantatee"<sup>38</sup> labourers who had stolen some of his cattle. The chief was supposed to be escorted by colonial soldiers and a maximum of two of his own retainers. However, the journal claimed that Maqoma, upon acquiring his pass, had led 100 mounted Rharhabe warriors, all of whom were equipped with muskets, over the border. The marauding band descended on Devenish's farm, bound his Khoi servants in leather straps and drove the victims in front of their horses for nearly two hours. Continuing this rampage, the regent and his men frightened an elderly widow, a Mrs. Bennett, from her home before McMaster and a few armed settlers chased them back across the Kat. McMaster was most enraged by the presence of six Khoi Cape Mounted Riflemen, the escorts from Fort Beaufort, within the chief's party.<sup>39</sup>

Reports of Maqoma's "inroad" into the colony stirred considerable emotion among the expansionist settlers. Hare and Stretch investigated the incident. While Jongumsobomvu had indeed obtained a pass to enter the colony in search of his stolen stock, there had been no armed incursion. The regent had been escorted by only two unarmed Xhosa interpreters, a British sergeant and his Khoi cavalrymen. A few Khoi farmers from the Kat River Settlement, who had also lost cattle to the "Mantatees", had joined in the ultimately unsuccessful pursuit. In fact, Devenish confessed to Stretch that McMaster, his landlord and an ardent expansionist, had threatened to evict him from his farm if he did not sign the letter which

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<sup>38</sup>"Mantatee" was a colonial term for a Sotho-speaking person working for a European. The term originates from Mantatisi who was queen regent of the Tlokwa during the 1820's. "Mantatees" were usually captives taken by Griqua raids in Transorangia and traded to white farmers in the Cape Colony. See Cobbing, "Mfecane as Alibi".

<sup>39</sup>For the initial reports see Grahamstown Journal, 25 April and 24 May 1839.

complained of Maqoma's supposed outrage. Similarly, Mrs. Bennett revealed that while the chief had visited her house, she had been pleased to receive such a "great man" as a guest and they shared a little wine before he continued searching for the stolen cattle. After the incident Jongumsobomvu complained to Stretch that "my cattle are stolen and the spoor is deep in the colony, and mixed with the cattle of the Boers. I look to the great chiefs of the colony for compensation, therefore write the government."<sup>40</sup> The regent had followed the treaty regulations and was unwilling to venture too far into the colony. McMaster had fabricated the entire event in an attempt to discredit the Glenelg system.

In April and May 1839 some Kat River Khoi and colonial farmers accused Maqoma's subjects of stealing their horses and cattle. Although the regent had been usually cooperative in sending the colony supposedly rustled stock, he was angry that Hare had refused to provide compensation for his cattle seized by the "Mantate<sup>es</sup>" in March. While the lieutenant-governor maintained that these animals were not within the colony, Jongumsobomvu, in early June, sent him a message that "these are your own treaties, and I now call upon you to abide by them and make restitution of my cattle traced into the colony". Frustrated with Maqoma's intransigence, Hare condemned him as a "drunken chief" and threatened, against Stretch's advice, to build a military post on the Blinkwater near the regent's cattle place. Immediately, Jongumsobomvu withdrew most of his herd eastward away from the colonial border, suspended all visits to Fort Beaufort and refused to produce the stock demanded of him by the Europeans. Communicating through Stretch, Hare, enraged at the chief who he had been attempting to cultivate as an ally, informed Maqoma that if he

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<sup>40</sup>For the investigation see (CA) LG 454 Kaffir Paper: File Relating to Macomo's Entering the Colony With an Armed Force, 1839. After the results of the investigation were published as a Government Notice in the Eastern Districts' Gazette and Grahamstown Journal of 11 July 1839 Devenish, at the insistence of McMaster's son, wrote a letter to the Grahamstown Journal, 18 July 1839, describing his confession as "one of the most infamous falsehoods that ever was framed".

failed to attend a meeting at Fort Beaufort a commando would be sent into his territory to seize cattle. The regent knew he had gone too far in testing colonial resolve. Submissive and meek, Jongumsobomvu met Hare on the seventeenth of June and informed the colonel that he had surrendered all the required stock to Stretch and reoccupied his cattle kraal near the fort. The regent knew all too well the devastation which a colonial patrol would create. According to Stretch, who received the horses and cattle from the chief before the conference, Maqoma "was in a terrible fright" at the prospect of a commando. Although Hare and Jongumsobomvu parted on friendly terms, the lieutenant-governor continued to establish a small military camp on the colonial side of the Blinkwater dangerously near the Jingqi cattle kraal.<sup>41</sup> Colonial justice proved itself weak and biased. While no action had been taken to retrieve Xhosa cattle for a cooperative chief, a commando was threatened when settler stock became involved. It became clear to Maqoma that certain elements within the colony wanted the treaty system to fail. European aggression loomed.

Believing Maqoma to be the key to the development of Christianity among the Rharhabe the LMS sent a recent arrival to South Africa, the Reverend Henry Calderwood, to establish a mission within sight of the regent's cattle kraal. James Read Senior, Jongumsobomvu's old friend from the Kat River settlement, introduced the chief to this zealous young missionary. Although Maqoma gave permission for Calderwood to construct a station on the Xhosa side of the Blinkwater, just a few hundred yards from his residence, many Jingqi headmen resented another colonial presence in their reoccupied territory. When the missionary moved to the site of his proposed station, several sub-chiefs demanded that he leave and claimed that "You are eating our land, and drinking our water, and we have too little of both already". However, with Jongumsobomvu's support

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<sup>41</sup>(CA) A1415(77), Napier Papers, Vol. V, 7, 14, 17, and 28 June and 5 July 1839, Hare to Napier.

Calderwood stood his ground and by the end of June 1839 he had begun preaching to the Jingqi. Initially, the missionary thought highly of Magoma and described him as:

evidently a man of strong good sense and decided intellect. He has a much more agreeable countenance than I expected. He appears a very thoughtful man, and must I should suppose despise in his heart many of the white men with whom he comes in contact and who think themselves superior...In times of great emergency he is the spirit and genius of Caffreland. In troublous times he is the arm of Caffreland. His mind will always give him great power in council and he is skilful and perfectly fearless in war.<sup>42</sup>

Within a few months Calderwood realized that Jongumsobomvu was not about to convert to Christianity but was using the missionaries to gain "the political and social advantages of knowledge". In October Magoma discovered that one of his ten wives had given birth to a child from an adulterous affair. Infuriated, the regent ordered the woman to bury her illegitimate infant alive and sent an armed warrior to ensure that the judgement was enforced. Calderwood was outraged at Jongumsobomvu's conduct and went to the cattle kraal to chastise him. Ironically, Magoma accused the missionary of defending the sinful and adulterous actions of his wife and claimed the divine right to exercise whatever decisions he wished. Jongumsobomvu had turned the tables. Christianity supported his actions. Calderwood was speechless. After this incident the young missionary despised Magoma and began accusing him of alcoholic instability. Calderwood's relationship with the regent deteriorated. While Magoma was making regular visits to the Fort Beaufort canteen at this time, there is no reason to believe that drunkenness had been responsible for his ordering the execution of the infant.<sup>43</sup> However, it

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<sup>42</sup>Council of World Missions, Box 16, Calderwood to LMS, 28 June 1839.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., Calderwood to LMS, 30 December 1839. (CL) MS 15,109, Journal of the Reverend William Impey, 14 October 1839. Also see Henry Calderwood, Caffres and Caffre Missions (London, 1858).

is possible that Sandile's approaching manhood, which signalled the end of Maqoma's regency, may have contributed to his foul temper and allegedly increased drinking. Jongumsobomvu was a traditional chief who ruled in the customary manner. His Great Place on the Keiskamma was far enough away from Knapp's Hope to keep Kayser in the dark about certain traditional practises which the missionaries found offensive. Calderwood's station was so close to Maqoma's house that nothing could be hidden. Additionally, the impatient young missionary was frustrated by his failure to convert the chief and began to look upon Xhosa society with complete contempt. Unlike Kayser and Laing, Calderwood began to support Godlonton's settler faction. As it became apparant that Maqoma's councillors had been correct in opposing the location of the mission, the chief realized that he had made a serious error in his search for knowledge and for support within the white community. Now he had an implaccable enemy as his closest neighbour, and one which enjoyed special protection from the colonial state.

Early in 1839 Suthu and her councillors, some of whom had been advisors to the late Ngqika, renewed their demand that Maqoma permit Sandile's circumcision. The heir was nearly nineteen years old and many of his age-mates had already been accepted into adulthood. This was embarrassing. Additionally, Jongumsobomvu feared that as Sandile's inheritance had been written into both the D'Urban and Stockenstrom treaties with the colony, any attempt to usurp him might jeopardize the existing peace. Since settler opposition to the Glenelg treaty had forced Stockenstrom to resign as lieutenant-governor in 1838, the regent feared a potential return to the dreaded patrol system. An internal Rharhabe dispute at this time might have prompted the colonial expansionists to reconquer Xhosaland. Jongumsobomvu was concerned that numerous witchcraft accusations among Tyali's subjects, which had been brought about by that chief's sudden illness, were displeasing the missionaries and revealing

vulnerable social division. The image of stability was essential. However, it was painful for Maqoma, a forty-one year old veteran warrior, to consider relinquishing the paramountcy to a mere boy whose club foot prevented him from every attaining martial prowess. Jongumsobomvu had resented Sandile for nearly twenty years. If this cripple became the Rharhabe ruler then Suthu, his Thembu mother, would become the real power behind the throne. With a commoner mother of Sotho and Khoisan origin, Maqoma had always despised the prestigious Thembu royals and had attacked Bowana and Galela in 1829. Unfortunately, the initiation could be delayed no longer and in late December 1839 Maqoma visited Stretch to inform him that Sandile would enter circumcision school in a few weeks. After emerging from the customary period of seclusion, the heir would ultimately assume his responsibilities as paramount.<sup>44</sup>

In early February 1840 Maqoma and Tyali travelled to Suthu's kraal, near Ngqika's former Great Place, to supervise Sandile's right of passage. Jongumsobomvu employed this opportunity to visit his old acquaintance, the Reverend Laing, at nearby Burnshill. The missionary was pleased that Maqoma attended church several times during his month-long stay in the area. On the twenty-second of February Sandile, who was in insolation with the other youths of Suthu's place, was circumcised. Although Maqoma and Tyali returned to their respective kraals, the heir was to remain in seclusion for many months to learn his duties as an adult and paramount chief.<sup>45</sup> Stretch presented Sandile's future councillors, some of whom had served Ngqika, with fifteen cows, ten sheep and a suit of European clothing as gifts for the heir. After the agent had expressed the hope that Sandile would enjoy friendly relations with the colony, the

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<sup>44</sup>For Stockenström see Hutton, Stockenström Vol. II, ch. XXV; for Tyali see (CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 1 August - 8 September 1838; for Maqoma's announcement see (CA) LG 398, Stretch to Hudson, 30 December 1839.

<sup>45</sup>(CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 3 and 24 February 1840.

councillors gave thanks for the presents and promised to give them to the young king as soon as he was fully installed.<sup>46</sup>

Returning to his cattle kraal on the Kat, Maqoma learned that several Fingo chiefs from Fort Peddie were demanding restitution for stock he had seized from them many months before. In reality, these two individuals, Nomganga and Kaulela, were former Pharhabe headmen who, in the post-war turmoil of 1836, had deserted to the Fingo labour camps around Fort Thomson. When these Fingo communities were being dissolved in 1837 they attempted to flee to Fort Beaufort with royal cattle loaned to them by Jongumsobomvu. In the subsequent seizure loyal Jingqi warriors had simply repossessed the rightful property of their ruler. It should be recalled that loyalty to the chief was the prime prerequisite and justification for the enjoyment of loan cattle. After Stretch inquired from the chief about this issue, Maqoma asked "why his Fingo followers have been kept in the colony and their unfounded complaints against him received attention from the colonial authorities?" Hesitant to confront Jongumsobomvu on this sensitive issue of chiefly power, the agent did not support the Fingo claim.<sup>47</sup>

In late July 1840 Maqoma returned to Suthu's kraal and ordered "that Sandilla(sic) should return home". Emerging from five months of seclusion, the heir, on the twentieth of July, was installed as paramount of the Ngqika. Stretch and Laing, the only Europeans present, observed all the principal Rharhabe chiefs and thousands of their subjects gathered for a lavish ceremony. Amidst the volley of 3000 muskets Sandile took his place next to the vassal rulers. Jongumsobomvu, as regent, spoke to the

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<sup>46</sup>(CA) LG 398, Hudson to Stretch, 7 January 1840; and Stretch to Hudson, 16 March 1840.

<sup>47</sup>(CA) LG 398, Stretch to Hudson, 1 April 1840; Statement made by Ngabe son of Macoma, 6 April 1840; Stretch to Hudson, 11 May 1840.

assembly at considerable length. After declaring that he was fulfilling his father's wish, Maqoma advised the young paramount to maintain peaceful co-existence with the colony and prevent stock rustling. As the oldest aristocrat, Ngeno stood up and said:

Peace is better than war and a nation that loves war can never be rich. The British Government is strong and we possess its friendship, the Governor sent cattle and sheep to Sandilla (sic), this was never done before to Gaika or any other chief.<sup>48</sup>

Predictably, Stretch and Laing were satisfied with these sentiments. Tradition has it that Tyali warned Sandile "to maintain the independence of this place with the sword!" Angry with this volatile advice, Jongumsobomvu cried "No!" and proceeded to inform the new ruler that "these mountains are yours, the animals in the forest are yours, we are yours!" Reminding Sandile of his obligation to respect the power of Ngqika's other sons, Maqoma said "we are now going back to the areas our father gave us to rule."<sup>49</sup> The installation was concluded. Maqoma's regency was over.

Continuing Maqoma's policy, Sandile, who made Suthu's kraal his Great Place, ordered the Ngqika sub-chiefs and headmen to halt stock theft from the frontier settlers. As ruler of the Jingqi, Jongumsobomvu maintained his nearly constant presence at Fort Beaufort in order to negotiate border disputes with the British officials. Stretch was quite pleased with the veteran chief's cooperation and reported that Xhosaland was in a "tranquil state." In late 1840, upon hearing that a settler's cattle and horses had been stolen allegedly by a group of Xhosa, Maqoma automatically presented Stretch with an equal amount of stock as compensation. The chief did not know who had actually rustled the animals

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<sup>48</sup>(CA) LG 398, Stretch to Hudson, 27 July 1840. (CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 19 July 1840.

<sup>49</sup>Interview with Chief Lent Maqoma.



but felt it was too risky to alienate the Europeans. An outbreak of smallpox was creating considerable commotion among all the Xhosa groups and it was not the time to resist colonial demands. Eventually, when Jongumsobomvu told Stretch that Tyali's subjects had actually stolen the cattle and horses in question, the British returned the Jingqi stock and demanded that the other chief produce the settler's property. While Tyali was angry, by early 1841 he had surrendered the required number of cattle and horses. After thanking Maqoma for his assistance in this case, Stretch reported to Hare that the return of stock to the chief would "inspire him with confidence, to pursue the same straight-forward line of conduct."<sup>50</sup> Although resentful of Sandile's new found power, Jongumsobomvu still believed that it was vital to placate the potentially aggressive colony.

Maqoma's relationship with Calderwood continued to deteriorate. Residing a few hundred yards from the chief's cattle kraal, this impatient and intolerant missionary wanted to become integrally involved in Jingqi affairs. Not surprisingly, he was rejected. Calderwood blamed Maqoma for his failure and began to harass the chief for his visits to the Fort Beaufort canteen. The missionary's constant nagging became so painful to Jongumsobomvu that he had his followers construct an alternate path to the fort which did not pass within sight of Calderwood's small mission. On one occasion the missionary confronted Maqoma at the gate to Fort Beaufort and said "The brandy will kill you. It kills your soul. It takes away the chief". Responding with humorous sarcasm, the Jingqi ruler claimed that "It is right for you to speak against brandy. I have never seen you take any. But the other white chiefs should hold their tongues when they say Maqoma drinks. You are simple. You come here in the day and you do not see what happens here in the night." Calderwood asked Jongumsobomvu

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<sup>50</sup>(CA) LG 399, Correspondence of Stretch to Hudson, 31 August 1840, 8 September 1840, 12 October 1840, 26 January, 22 February, and 15 March 1841; also see Stretch to Hare, 1 and 15 March 1841.

if he visited the fort after dark. Pointing at the officers' mess and parodying the etiquette of toasting, Maqoma said:

Do you see that house? When the sun goes away and you have gone home, a little man with a red coat comes out and blows a horn. Then that house is lighted up lighter than day. The officers come out of their houses, all washed and dressed, and so fine! This (toasting) they continue as long as they can see one another across the table. Then they go home the best way they can.<sup>51</sup>

Once again and cleverly, Maqoma had outwitted the self-righteous missionary. However, the next confrontation would not be so light-hearted.

In the middle of 1841 Jongumsobomvu promised to marry his younger sister, Hena, to a cattle rich headman from another chiefdom. The bridewealth would be enormous. Unfortunately, Hena had been attending school at Calderwood's station where she was considered to be nearly prepared for baptism. Calderwood became determined not to permit the marriage of his best pupil to a "heathen" polygamist and he refused to let Maqoma take Hena from the school. At the same time a dissatisfied concubine of the Jingqi chief also fled to the mission. When Nothonto attempted to convince Hena, her daughter, to obey Maqoma's order, Calderwood expelled the elderly woman from the station and described her as "eminently a child of the Devil". This statement illustrates Calderwood's complete failure to gain the trust of the Xhosa as Nothonto had developed close friendships with other missionaries such as the Ross family, Frederick Kayser, and James Laing. Within a few weeks Calderwood's position had become so tenuous that he fled with the two fugitive women to Cape Town where he had accepted a temporary position at a new church. Hena and the concubine worked as his servants and were converted eventually to Christianity. However, Calderwood had not informed John Philip, the local LMS director, of this action and by

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<sup>51</sup>Calderwood, Caffres and Caffre Missions, p. 86.



October 1842 he had been forced to return the two women to Xhosaland. Ultimately, to maintain the sympathy of the other missionaries, Maqoma promised not to marry Hena to a non-Christian.<sup>52</sup>

With Sandile and Tyali dominating the land east of the Gaga and another drought beginning to ravage Xhosaland, Maqoma became interested in quietly re-acquiring his stolen land across the colonial border where the grazing appeared better. In February 1842 the Jingqi chief squatted on Blakeway's farm near Fort Beaufort but was quickly and quietly evicted by British soldiers. Hare informed Governor Napier that while "All is quiet in this neighbourhood, Maqoma is rather troublesome for more land within the colony of which he shall not get a foot... he now wants more land at the Blinkwater."<sup>53</sup> By the start of the 1840's Kona, as Jongumsobomvu's eldest and right-hand son, had become head of a large Jingqi kraal. Determined to regain his father's former territory, this twenty-four year old aristocrat, in January 1842, had begun letting his cattle graze over the border of the colony and within the Kat River Settlement where his warriors fought several minor skirmishes with angry Khoi farmers. When Sandile attempted to put a stop to this trespassing, Kona led a raid on one of the Ngqika paramount's villages and seized all the cattle for himself. To present the image of a united royal family to the colonial officials, Maqoma, in the company of Stretch, reconciled himself with both Sandile and Tyali. However, Kona continued to graze his herd across the boundary but did not steal stock from the colonists. On the thirtieth of March, Stretch found Jongumsobomvu near Fort Beaufort and demanded that he

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<sup>52</sup>World Council of Missions, box 18, Calderwood to LMS, 6 July 1841 and 10 October 1842. The Home and Foreign Missionary Record for the Free Church of Scotland, Edinburgh, Vol. II, No. 4, April 1845, pp. 62-63. Hena's real name was probably Nomina. One of Maqoma's praises describes him as "the long spear of Nomina" who was his sister. See Rubusana, Zemk'Iinkomo, p. 257.

<sup>53</sup>(CA) A1415(77), Napier Papers, Vol. 8, Hare to Napier, 18 February 1842.

curtail the border violations. Maqoma said that, "the other agents had procured for their respective tribes permission to graze their cattle in the colony" and claimed "that her majesty had desired the late Lieutenant Governor (Stockenstrom) to give him his country back up to the old boundary of the Fish River but that he had not done so."<sup>54</sup> While the diplomatic agent denied these accusations, drought in Xhosaland forced the Jingqi to continue grazing their herds over the colonial border from where they were periodically expelled. Finally, Maqoma moved 160 cattle into a plot of colonial land near the Kat River Settlement which he had rented from Field Cornet Botha.<sup>55</sup> Stretch noted that Jongumsobomvu's so-called trespassing was motivated by drought to the east but he still did not desire a conflict with the Europeans.

It became obvious in April that Tyali, who had been suffering from tuberculosis for some time, would not live much longer. This presented Maqoma with an opportunity to expand his power. Realizing what his rival half-brother intended to do, Tyali attempted to spoil Jongumsobomvu's plans by warning Stretch. Laying on his death-bed, the gasping chief claimed that Maqoma "wishes when I am dead to eat up my people and destroy Gaika's house, when my messengers went to him he was always drunk and knew not what they said - the Governor must not believe him".<sup>56</sup> Despite the implications, Stretch recognized this as an internal Xhosa political issue and did not interfere. Late in the month the Reverend John Ross, who was stationed at the Pirie mission in the southern reaches of Ngqika

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<sup>54</sup>(CA) LG 399, Stretch to Hudson, 29 January, 15 February, and 30 March 1842. (SAL) MSB 242,1 (1), Major Madden Hall to Stretch, 17 April 1842.

<sup>55</sup>(CA) LG 400, Stretch to Hare, 3 April 1842 and Stretch to Major Hall, 20 June 1842.

<sup>56</sup>(CA) LG 400, Statement of Tyali, 14 April 1842. Tyali's statement on Maqoma's alcoholism will be addressed below.

territory, feared that a great "smelling out" would be forthcoming.<sup>57</sup> Covertly, Maqoma enlisted a Fingo witchdoctor, who worked for the chief's friend Field Cornet Botha, to visit Tyali's kraal for the purpose of determining the individual responsible for bewitching him. Living under colonial protection, the Fingo would be less hesitant to "smell out" a powerful person. Late in the month Sandile and his councillors gathered around the dying chief. At the request of the witchdoctor Suthu was summoned to Tyali's kraal and under pressure from the common people Sandile proclaimed that "the doctor must tell who it is that is killing Tyali even if the guilt be in me or Mocomo(sic)." Encouraged by this statement and in the presence of a large assembly, the Fingo pointed at Suthu and charged her with causing Tyali's illness by putting bewitching matter (ubuti) in some sugar she had given him at Fort Cox. To complete the indictment, the witchdoctor also accused her of having killed Ngqika in 1829. Shortly after Tyali passed away and during the confusion of mourning, Suthu escaped from the kraal but was captured and placed under guard. If she was executed then Sandile's paramountcy might be usurped and Maqoma, as the former regent, put in his place.

The Reverends Alex McDiarmid and William Chalmers and Mrs. Chalmers, all local missionaries who were indebted to Suthu for her protection during the last war, pressured Botha to remove his Fingo employee from Xhosaland. The missionaries accompanied Botha to Maqoma's kraal where they observed that the Field Cornet seemed afraid of offending the chief by withdrawing the Fingo witchdoctor. Referring to the Fingo, Jongumsobomvu insisted that "the affair is in the middle, and he must finish it". Eventually, Botha gave in to the missionaries' threats that he would lose his field cornetship and took the Fingo back to his farm west of the Kat. In the first week of May Sandile permitted his mother to return to her own kraal until the affair was settled. Within a few days

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<sup>57</sup>(CL) MS 3246, 28 April 1842, Extract from the journal of John Ross.

Suthu had fled to Burnshill where she received sanctuary from the Reverend Laing. When Stretch informed Colonel Hare of the situation the lieutenant governor dispatched an extra 100 infantrymen to Fort Beaufort and a message to Jongumsobomvu that if Suthu was injured the diplomatic agent would be withdrawn. This meant a possible return to the oppressive patrol system and Bhotomane and Nqeno refused to support the witchcraft accusation. The Jingqi chief also became apprehensive about pursuing the charges. By the middle of May all the chiefs had met with Hare and assured him that Suthu would remain safe and retain her rank and position.<sup>58</sup> Believing Sandile and Suthu to be potentially pro-colonial, the British officials and missionaries had interfered with the traditional mechanism for removing a weak ruler in favour of a more capable one. It is also likely that Hare saw the young and crippled Sandile as a chief who could be more easily intimidated than the veteran warrior Jongumsobomvu. Maqoma's plot had been foiled.

In the middle of 1842 the prevailing drought worsened. With the failure of crops, hungry Xhosa along the colonial frontier stole stock from the settlers. To make matters worse, the subjects of the late Tyali lacked a leader strong enough to prevent them from violating the border treaty. Since Tyali's principle sons, Oba and Feni, were still minors, Xhoxho, a son of Ngqika and favourite of Maqoma, was appointed regent but proved ineffectual and was quickly replaced by the former chief's widows none of whom became a forceful ruler.<sup>59</sup> Additionally, the youthful and volatile Tola, leader of a renegade section of the Dange, sanctioned his people's raiding of European farms. The stability of the Glenelg system

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<sup>58</sup>The Grahamstown Journal, letter from A. McDiarmid, 19 May 1842. (CA) A1415(77), Napier Papers, Vol. 8, Hare to Napier, 5 and 12 May 1842. While McDiarmid attempted to deflect blame from Maqoma, his letter contains considerable evidence linking the Jingqi chief to Botha and the witchdoctor. Stretch and Hare believed firmly that Jongumsobomvu had been behind the accusation.

<sup>59</sup>Peires, The House of Phalo, p. 130.

was in serious jeopardy and Hare reported to the governor that he was "helpless to stop the depredations"<sup>60</sup>.

Peires's contention that Maqoma, who was frustrated with his failure to usurp Sandile, "spent even more time in Fort Beaufort, drinking with his officer friends and neglecting the concerns of his people" is not correct.<sup>61</sup> In reality, Jongumsobomvu strove actively to maintain peace with the powerful colony. Throughout the remainder of 1842 and the beginning of 1843 the Jingqi chief continued to surrender stock which the colonists claimed his people had stolen. This required almost constant liaison visits to the British military at Fort Beaufort which usually involved a few drinks of brandy. Eager to slander Maqoma, expansionist settlers spread rumours that he was an unstable drunkard. It is highly possible that the officers at the post tried to ply the chief with alcohol, which they knew he enjoyed, in order to take advantage of him. However, Jongumsobomvu always resisted the British officers' desire for their patrols to enter Xhosa territory. Significantly, whenever the chief visited Stretch's residence he was consistently sober. When Hare complained to Maqoma about the increased number of border violations by the Xhosa, the chief responded that "I fall upon the spoor daily, I have sent cattle, and horses, to the Colony, that were stolen from it. The reason I do it is that my name shall not be used that we are delinquents".<sup>62</sup> Neither did Maqoma abandon his people nor give up his campaign to discredit Sandile. After successfully defending his chieftom from a raid by Orange River Boers, the Jingqi leader told Stretch that Sandile's council contained stock thieves. When the agent threatened to

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>62</sup>For the refusal re. colonial patrols see (CA) LG 401, Stretch to Hudson, 24 July 1843. For Maqoma's reply see (CA) LG 401, Stretch to Hudson, 22 November 1842. For his returning allegedly stolen stock see (CA) LG 600, Diary of Stretch, 29 August 1843.

conduct all colonial communication through Jongumsobomvu, the paramount sent some cattle to the Europeans as a symbol of friendship. Also, the chief used his influence with Stretch to get him to order the commander of Fort Beaufort to supply the Jingqi with military rations as a supplement to their meagre diet.<sup>63</sup> Undoubtedly, Maqoma remained an effective authority among the Xhosa.

Unable to control his people's stock theft from the settlers and too weak willed to resist colonial demands, Sandile, in May 1843, agreed to assist British troops in expelling Tola's group east of the Keiskamma.<sup>64</sup> Remembering the ravages of the old patrol system, Maqoma became furious with his younger superior and continued to refuse similar requests. The presence of colonial soldiers in Xhosaland set a dangerous precedent. Fearing another attempt against him, Sandile warned Stretch that the Jingqi chief was planning to assassinate him and had harboured some of Tola's thieves.<sup>65</sup> However, with the Europeans threatening further interference, Maqoma was not about to start a Ngqika civil war.

During this time Kona built up his own section of the Jingqi and travelled boldly through the Kat River settlement to establish a cattle kraal sixty kilometres north on the Klipplaat River near the Moravian mission of Shiloh. Seeing Namba approach circumcision age, Kona, in the usual tradition of a right-hand son, was attempting to pioneer a semi-autonomous chiefdom in a new area. He must have also been attempting to escape the threat of colonial intrusion. In September Kona executed one of his subjects for witchcraft. There was a missionary outcry and Stretch, under Hare's direction, protested to Jongumsobomvu and warned

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<sup>63</sup>For the raid see (CA) LG 400, Stretch to Hudson, 31 August 1842. For the rations see (CA) LG 401, Stretch to Hudson, 27 December 1842.

<sup>64</sup>(CA) LG 401, Stretch to Hudson, 31 May 1843.

<sup>65</sup>(CA) LG 403, Statement of Sandile to Stretch, 4 July 1843.



that the dissatisfied settlers were demanding new border treaties. Despite the colonial rumours that the Jingqi chief was "too drunk to care what is going on with his people", Magoma informed the agent that:

Seeing the colonists only have taken half the treaties and they are beginning to break down the other half - I will not - nor do I agree with them. I will hold by Stockenstrom's word until I die and my people put me in the grave. If the treaties are forced from us nothing can preserve us from war.

Immediately the lieutenant governor sent a message to Stretch demanding that Magoma explain how the settlers had violated half the treaty. Within a few days Jongumsobomvu sent the agent a letter for Hare which accused the Europeans of courting conflict along the frontier and meddling in the internal affairs of the Xhosa chiefdoms. "I said the colonists are only taking half the treaties because they talk of war and what the chiefs do in their own country," wrote Magoma through his Khoi interpreter, "Tola was not a colonist, he was not a trader, he was not a Hottentot, and why should they talk of our laws - and interfere with the chiefs." How could such an articulate message have been formulated by a supposedly drunken chief? Desperate to maintain the treaties which guaranteed Xhosa autonomy, Jongumsobomvu, in December 1843, sent twenty-seven cattle to Fort Beaufort.<sup>66</sup>

Orthodox accounts portray Magoma, during the middle to late 1840's, as an incompetent drunkard and cite the eye-witness report of Private Buck Adams, a British dragoon stationed at Fort Beaufort, as evidence. According to this soldier, in late July 1844, Jongumsobomvu and an entourage of twenty-seven women and forty warriors visited the post to collect "money which he was periodically allowed by the Government as compensation for a portion of land which had been appropriated by the British". The chief proceeded to the "wine shed" and sat on his haunches

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<sup>66</sup>For the quotations see (CA) LG 401, Stretch to Hare, 17 October 1843; and Stretch to Hudson, 21 October 1843. For the surrender of stock see (CA) LG 401, Stretch to Hudson, 11 December 1843.

with his wives seated around him. Taking a drink of liquor, Maqoma would then eject it into the mouth of his favourite wife. After consuming twenty bottles of wine and six of Cape Smoke (a type of peach brandy), Jongumsobomvu was quite drunk and many of the women had to be carried out of the post. While there is little doubt that Maqoma did indulge in alcohol at Fort Beaufort, this tale is questionable. The Jingqi ruler had not been granted a stipend by the British at this time and the money Adams refers to could only have been given to him to encourage drinking. That Jongumsobomvu was given access to the "wine shed" and not Pope's canteen, also suggests that the British soldiers were deliberately plying him with liquor. It is also unlikely that all the chief's wives were alcoholics. Nevertheless, the strongest indictment of this account is that it was written in 1884, forty years after the event in question, and by a former soldier who had eventually fought the Xhosa in the gruelling frontier war of 1846-47.<sup>67</sup> Adams exaggerates Maqoma's and his wives' drinking to illustrate the savage and uncivilized nature of his African enemies. The writer dehumanizes the chief in order to justify his ultimate dispossession. In reality, Maqoma was not on such friendly terms with the Fort Beaufort garrison and complained to Stretch that "the soldiers...come from Fort Beaufort and drill before my house. I am in the back when they are there and I see they look into my house and I am afraid."<sup>68</sup> Surely, if the chief was being harassed by the British troops then it is unlikely he would have gone to the post just to socialize with them. The purpose of his periodic trips to the Fort Beaufort was still the maintenance of the border treaty. It is strange that Stretch did not record even a rumour of the event described by Adams and suggested having Maqoma

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<sup>67</sup>A. Gordon-Brown (ed.), The Narrative of Private Buck Adams, (Cape Town, 1941), pp. 39-41. For the use of Adams's story in later settler propaganda see F.C. Metrowich, Frontier Flames, (Cape Town, 1968), p. 104; Meintjes, Sandile, p. 128-29; and Milton, The Edges of War, p. 149. In these three books the tale of Adams is the only proof offered for the condemnation of Maqoma as an unstable drunkard.

<sup>68</sup>(CA) LG 600, Diary of Stretch, 9 February 1844.

confiscate colonial liquor from the Xhosa as he thought intoxication might contribute to stock theft. Throughout 1844 Jongumsobomvu represented the interests of his people by protecting individuals accused of rustling from the colony and surrendering moderate quantities of cattle demanded by the settlers.<sup>69</sup>

By March 1844 Sir Peregrine Maitland had become governor of the Cape Colony. While Napier had been determined to uphold the Glenelg system, Maitland, a sixty-seven year old Waterloo veteran, became sympathetic to settler demands for new border arrangements. Belief in authoritarian colonial development had caused Maitland to be scorned during his tenure in Canada but in South Africa he seemed to be just what the colonists desired. After seven years of disagreement, the official mind of Cape Town and Grahamstown had converged. The murder of a white frontier farmer, allegedly by Xhosa rustlers, prompted the draconian governor to sail to the Eastern Cape. In September Maitland arrived in the area but refused to see the Ngqika chiefs. Angrily, Maqoma told Stretch that "I cannot comprehend what has been thrown over my body that makes me so offensive in the eyes of the government."<sup>70</sup> Meeting the Gqunukhwebe, Ndlambe, and Mbalu chiefs at Fort Peddie, Maitland announced the end of the Stockenstrom treaties and reaffirmed the right of armed patrols of soldiers and settlers to enter Xhosaland in search of stolen stock. Additionally, Xhosa living at mission stations would no longer be subject to traditional law. Along the frontier districts the colonists rejoiced and a large celebration was held in Grahamstown. Conversely, when the Ngqika of Maqoma and Sandile heard that the hated patrol system was about to return, they began preparations for war. In early October the governor summoned all the Ngqika chiefs, including Maqoma, to Fort

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<sup>69</sup>(CA) LG 403, Stretch to Hudson, 16 July 1844 and Stretch to Hare, 11 August 1844.

<sup>70</sup>(CA) GH 14/1, Stretch to John Montague, 25 September 1844.

Beaufort where in the presence of 400 mounted dragoons they were informed of the colony's new border policy. While the intimidated chiefs agreed to the terms, when asked later by Stretch why they had been so submissive, they replied, "Did you not see the swords of the Dragoons?"<sup>71</sup> Once again, the Europeans were becoming aggressive.

The patrol system had returned. A little over a week after Maqoma and the other Ngqika chiefs had met Maitland, Kona seized some cattle from a small group of his people who had gone to live just over the colonial border near Blinkwater. Although the Jingqi right-hand son was merely repossessing royal stock from deserters, Colonel Somerset demanded that the animals be returned. Conspiring to provoke the launching of a commando into Xhosa territory, the Resident Justice of the Peace at Fort Beaufort, one Bouchard, and the agent general in Grahamstown, Houghan Hudson, spread reports that Jongumsobomvu had taken a share of the booty and was too drunk to control Kona. Hare was forced to threaten the Jingqi chief with military action if the cattle were not surrendered. As before, Stretch, who lived in Xhosaland and was often visited by Maqoma, did not report that the chief was drinking excessively. However, faced with the possibility of a colonial raid, Jongumsobomvu, not twenty-four hours after receiving Hare's message, brought the required stock to Fort Beaufort.<sup>72</sup> Aggression had been allayed.

By December Colonel Hare, under instructions from Maitland in Cape Town, had produced a formal, written treaty based on the proclamations of

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<sup>71</sup>Milton, The Edges of War, pp. 151-152.

<sup>72</sup>(CA) LG 632, Hudson to Stretch, 14 and 16 October 1844; Hudson to Bouchard, 16 October 1844; Hudson to Stretch, 14 and 15 November 1844. For Stretch's correspondence see (CA) GH 14/1, Papers Received From Border Tribes and Diplomatic Agents, 1844. While Hudson and Bouchard were condemning Maqoma, Stretch's reports to Hudson and Montague (the Secretary to Government in Cape Town) do not substantiate their claims. In light of Maitland's new border policy, this is a clear indication of a colonial attempt to discredit Jongumsobomvu.

October. While all the Ngqika chiefs, including Maqoma and Sandile, delayed the signing until the end of the month, it was impossible to prevent the colony from implementing this decision. Nevertheless, when the Ngqika chiefs and 300 headmen and councillors met Hare at Victoria, a small military post in the old Ceded Territory, on the thirty-first of December, they convinced the colonial officials to allow twenty additional days for further consideration. It was likely that Sandile, Maqoma and the other Rharhabe aristocrats thought that postponing the signing might give their missionary sympathizers time to act as they had in 1836. This would prove useless. Glenelg and his philanthropist friends no longer controlled the Colonial Office. Wisely unwilling to risk the destruction of the first "extensive and healthy" maize crop in roughly five years, Sandile and Jongumsobomvu, by the middle of January 1845, had little alternative but to formalize the new border arrangements which had been forced upon them. However, as Maqoma marked his "X" on the document, he said "I sign for the old treaties". James Laing, who was also present at the meeting, observed that the Jingqi chief "most keenly complained about the protection which government was making to those who wished to leave off the Kaffir customs".<sup>73</sup>

Although Maqoma cooperated with the colonial officials by returning allegedly stolen stock, he became concerned that his subjects living around missions were no longer considered to be under traditional law. Those dissatisfied with chiefly authority began moving gradually to the stations and from there many entered the colony as wage-labourers. A repetition of the Fingo crisis of 1835-36 seemed imminent. A year earlier John Bennie, a teacher at Burnshill, had reported that Maqoma "had

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<sup>73</sup>(CA) GH 14/2, Entries in Stretch's diary for 30 and 31 December 1844 and 21 January 1845; For the new treaties see (CA) GH 19/4, Hare to Montague, 16 September 1844. For Maqoma's statement see Eastern Province Herald, 26 February 1848. For the complaint see (CL) MS 16.579, Journal of Laing, 21 January 1845.

something against the missionaries".<sup>74</sup> This sudden resentment had probably been stimulated by the conflict with Calderwood and the Chalmers family's interference in the chief's plot to oust Sandile. When a Xhosa teacher named Boesacke seemed to threaten Nothonto by preaching to her on the subject of "death", Jongumsobomvu, in April, ordered the seizure of his cattle and his expulsion from Jingqi territory. Insubordination towards the Queen Mother was an intolerable challenge to traditional rule. Namba, the great son who had recently entered manhood, executed his father's decision. The Reverend Laing approached Magoma to complain about Boesacke's punishment but the chief informed him that it had been a mistake to admit missionaries into Xhosaland for "they were stealing the people and becoming chiefs and magistrates". A few days later Sandile, eager to please the colony and discredit his older half-brother, visited Stretch to express his disapproval of Jongumsobomvu's actions. The hostility of the Jingqi aristocrats toward the missionaries increased and Namba demanded that the Reverend Kayser abandon Knapp's Hope. In late August Magoma visited his mother at the Jingqi Great Place on the Keiskamma with the intention of discussing "political" matters. Some weeks later, to Kayser's horror and dismay, Nothonto, who had seemed interested in Christianity since the 1820's, repudiated white culture and became a rainmaker. While the missionary lamented his sudden failure as the work of Satan, its root lay actually in the material world.<sup>75</sup> As an experienced ruler, Magoma eventually realized that under present circumstances mission activity threatened to erode the most important obstacle to European conquest, traditional authority.

While Magoma's relationship with the missionaries deteriorated, he

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<sup>74</sup>(CL) MS 3456, J. Bennie to his brother, 6 February 1843.

<sup>75</sup>This paragraph is based on (CA) GH 14/3, Diary of Stretch, 12 and 21 April 1845; (CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 11 and 19 April 1845, and 3 May 1845; (CA) GH 14/5, 30 August 1845, Diary of Stretch; Hummel, Kayser Journal, p. 178.

continued to deal effectively with the colonial officials. In January 1845 he had ordered his people to deliver a horse to Fort Beaufort "because it has been stole(sic) from the Queen's kraal which the Lieutenant Governor placed in the Caffer Country to help the chiefs". After a skirmish between the Fingo servants of a Boer farmer and some Jingqi warriors who were defending their herd, Namba, in July, surrendered a Xhosa thief to the European authorities. Subsequent rumours among Jongumsobomvu's followers that they were to be expelled from the old Ceded Territory caused considerable tension within the community. However, when Maqoma appealed to Stretch, the agent promised convincingly that there would be no eviction. Determined to avoid colonial invasion, the Jingqi chief continued to make periodic deliveries of cattle and horses to the British. Complaining to Stretch that deserters from the Seventh Dragoons had stolen two of his horses, Jongumsobomvu stated calmly that "you know I am at Beaufort, and that is the gate which I am guarding least the thieves should prevail". Despite the chief's efforts to maintain stable relations with the colony, certain elements within colonial society wanted to discredit him and encourage the re-conquest of former Queen Adelaide Province. In September Xhosa collaborators who worked for the British as "Kaffir Police", reported having tracked stolen colonial horses to Maqoma's kraal. Angry with this false accusation, Jongumsobomvu told Stretch that "If a black man lies he has guilt - How is it that it is not the same with the police? ... Making a man a thief is the same as killing him." Within a month some Khoi farmers from the Kat River Settlement had claimed that a group of Jingqi warriors had stolen four muskets from them and that they had been tracked to within seventeen yards of Maqoma's residence. Wisely, the chief sent Makrexana, his young son who had been raised by Stretch, to convince the agent of his innocence. The mission was successful. Maqoma received a thirty-six pound reward for his cooperation in recovering colonial stock and supposedly spent it all on two days of schnapps drinking at Fort Beaufort.

The fact that the British officers enjoyed themselves as much or more than the chief would indicate that he was attempting to gain the favour of these potential enemies. Although Namba, in January 1846, had surrendered two aged horses and five cows to the Europeans, Jongumsobomvu forced his Great Son to deliver three additional mares which had been demanded.<sup>76</sup> Peace with the colony remained vital.

In January 1846 Hare dispatched a small party of surveyors to Block Drift, near Stretch's residence on the Tyume, to plan the construction of a new military post in Khosaland. Although Sandile previously had agreed to the proposal, an enraged section of his council encouraged him to demand that the survey team withdraw and he called Stretch and the governor "rascals". Within a day fifty British infantrymen had arrived at Block Drift. Quickly, a conference was arranged. On the twenty-ninth of the month Hare arrived at the site with an escort of several hundred dragoons. When Sandile arrived with 5000 warriors, many of whom had firearms, the lieutenant governor realized that he could not intimidate the paramount. However, Sandile also knew the potential cost of a conflict and delivered a written apology to Colonel Hare but maintained his objection to a post in the area. Worried by the overwhelming number of warriors, a nervous Hare withdrew from Block Drift with the surveyors. In 1910 Tanco, a venerable Xhosa headman who had witnessed the tense meeting, told George Cory, a settler historian, that "we were very keen to get at the soldiers. I was there and very anxious to begin fighting them.... When they went we Gaikas fired over their heads to all sides. Stretch said to Sandilli(sic) that that was tantamount to a declaration of

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<sup>76</sup>This paragraph is based on (CA) GH 14/2, Diary of Stretch, 29 January 1845; (CA) GH 14/3, Diary of Fynn (Thembu Resident), 14 June 1845; (CA) GH 14/4, Diary of Stretch, 3, 13, 14, and 15 July, and 12 August 1845; (CA) GH 14/5, Diary of Stretch, 4 and 27 September, and 2 and 14 December 1845, and 5 and 23 January 1846. The reference (GH 14/5, 2 December 1845) to Maqoma drinking schnapps was Stretch's only direct observation of the chief consuming alcohol. Stretch is a reliable source as he was a colonial official who seemed genuinely sympathetic to the Xhosa.



war."<sup>77</sup> Conflict seemed inevitable.

Remembering clearly the ravages of the colonial invasion eleven years before, Maqoma disagreed with the young Sandile's antagonistic approach. Two days before the Block Drift conference Jongumsobomvu visited Stretch to warn that:

Sandile has threatened to kill Mr. Stretch's messengers, he has broken down the wall between the white and black man, he has broken down all I and Tyali and Stockenstrom did - Tyali is dead, Stockenstrom is gone, and I will seek a place of rest in the colony. My name in this work, in this war, shall not be mentioned. I swore to the governor I never would have war. I have told the lieutenant governor so - I have told you so - you were present when in the presence of all the chiefs I swore at King William's Town war must cease - thieving and war does not make us rich.

In turn, J.C. Smith, a settler official at Fort Beaufort, advised his superiors in Grahamstown not to attach much importance to the Jingqi chief's professions as he would be "glad to avail himself of any circumstance which might lead to the removal of Sandile from the head of the tribe."<sup>78</sup> At this time Maqoma's desire to oust Sandile was based on both personal ambition and the belief that renewed warfare with the colony would devastate Xhosa society. Suthu was also concerned and sent Hare repeated messages stating that "Sandile is your dog and you must scold him when he sends you a bad word," and that "the councillors have deceived her child." A week after the Block Drift conference Jongumsobomvu sent Stretch news that the Xhosa were "unsettled but that he and Eno(sic) were government men." At the same time, Laing heard rumours that the Jingqi ruler had professed peace. In the second week of February Maqoma dined

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<sup>77</sup>PP, C.786 of 1847, Correspondence Relative to the Kaffirs 1845-46, pp. 36-38, 44-45, 52, and 61. For the Xhosa account see Michael J. Berning, The Historical Conversations of Sir George Cory (Cape Town, 1989), p. 126.

<sup>78</sup>For both quotations see (CA) LG 657, Stretch to Hudson, 26 January 1846 and J.C. Smith to Hudson, 27 January 1846.

with Stretch at the Tyume residency and expressed his determination "to sit at Beaufort and that the Kaffirs might desire him in vain to leave it." In another attempt to reduce Sandile's power, Jongumsobomvu's agents held a witch-dance at the late Tyali's kraal. The paramount's grandmother and uncle were accused of employing sorcery to stop the rain from falling but were not executed as Magoma had failed to attend the ceremony. With missionaries and colonial officials condemning the "smelling out" ritual it was risky for the chief to be associated directly with it. When Sandile visited Phato's country to enlist assistance against the expected European attack, Suthu feared that Jongumsobomvu would have her burned for witchcraft. However, the paramount enjoyed the support of his councillors and the third of the kingdom which he and Suthu ruled. In early March ninety year old Ngeno, Magoma's oldest friend and ally, became terminally ill and Stretch made his headmen promise that there would be no witchcraft accusations. As tensions mounted within Sandile's group, Jongumsobomvu told his agent that in the event of war his community was prepared to remain neutral and move into the colony.<sup>79</sup> Sandile would not be usurped.

In the middle of March 1846 Tsili, a member of Tola's Dange, stole an axe from a store at Fort Beaufort and was arrested. As the accused man was being escorted to Grahamstown for trial, the party was ambushed by Xhosa warriors. Tsili was freed. When Hare sent furious messages to Tola and Sandile demanding that the thief be surrendered, the chiefs refused. Immediately, the lieutenant governor informed Maitland that war was unavoidable and prepared colonial forces for an invasion of Xhosaland. The settlers were thrilled. Even the philanthropic missionary faction, as voiced by John Fairbairn's Cape Town newspaper, approved of the proposed

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<sup>79</sup>(CA) GH 14/6, Diary of Stretch, 5, 9, and 25 February and 6 to 9 March 1846.

conflict as a way to bring the chiefs back on the path to Christianity.<sup>80</sup> Queen Adelaide Province would be reconquered.

As the white traders and missionaries in Xhosaland fled to the Colony and Kat River Settlement, Maqoma, in late March, held a prolonged meeting with his councillors. On the twenty-eighth of the month Jongumsobomvu visited Stretch, who was packing his belongings, and warned that Sandile and many other chiefs would fight. Swearing that he wanted no part in the hostilities, Maqoma asked the agent for a plot of colonial land where his people could move for sanctuary. Since Kona's cattle kraal had been in Thembu territory near the Shiloh mission for some time, the Jingqi ruler applied for official permission to move all his followers and stock into that area if a conflict occurred. This would not only remove his chieftom from the path of a colonial attack, it would also divorce it from Sandile's authority. Maqoma had wanted to form an autonomous state since the 1820's but had been foiled repeatedly. However, Hare thought it might be dangerous to let the Jingqi move through the Kat River Settlement in large numbers and did not want to provoke a conflict with Mapassa's Thembu. Maqoma's request was denied. Seven months later the Reverend Calderwood, although an enemy of Jongumsobomvu, described:

This as a great error, for whatever Maqoma's motives were, his absence from Caffreland would have seriously weakened the war party. Maqoma has much influence and great activity in war. The people look much to him.<sup>81</sup>

Although Maqoma was under tremendous pressure from those Xhosa who advocated war, he believed armed conflict at this time would be a futile

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<sup>80</sup>Milton, The Edges of War, p. 155-156.

<sup>81</sup>For Maqoma's request see (CA) LG 403, Stretch to Hudson, 25 and 28 March 1846 and Stretch to Major Smith, 30 March 1846. For Calderwood see Council of World Missions, Box 22, Report of H. Calderwood, 8 October 1846. Contrary to Noel Mostert's opinion that Maqoma wanted to abandon his political responsibilities and enter the colony to become a "gentleman farmer", the evidence proves that the Jingqi chief wanted to take his entire chieftom into independent Thembuland. See Mostert, Frontiers.

endeavour. It was an awkward position.

On the eleventh of April 1846 Colonel Henry Somerset, commander of the frontier forces and old adversary of Maqoma, initiated a three pronged invasion across the Fish and Keiskamma rivers. Encountering no resistance, the three columns, supplied by a huge train of 125 wagons, converged on Sandile's empty Great Place at the foot of the Amatola mountains. Laing's nearby station of Burnshill had also been abandoned just a few days previous. The next day Somerset left the cumbersome supply train and led 500 men into the Amatola valley to locate the Ngqika warriors. While the soldiers combed the thick bush for their elusive enemy, a large force of Sandile's men ambushed the weakly protected train capturing sixty-five wagons full of food and ammunition. As Somerset's failed expedition withdrew to Block Drift, Ngqika warriors raided colonial posts and farms along the frontier. Every chiefdom in Ciskeian Xhosaland came to Sandile's assistance. Even the Gqunukhwebe of Phato, who had collaborated during the last invasion, attacked the Fingo settlement around Fort Peddie because it had been built on their former land.<sup>82</sup> This initial success increased Sandile's popularity and legitimacy.

It is difficult to reconstruct Maqoma's movements and activities during the first five months of what would become known as "the War of the Axe". Fearing the colonial onslaught, Jongumsobomvu and his subjects abandoned their kraals and drove their cattle into the bush. The chief's pleas for peace had been ignored by both sides. The settler press which had always attempted to discredit Maqoma, published military reports of him participating vigorously in the Xhosa campaign. Signifying the Jingqi ruler's anger with the young Xhosa radicals who had contributed to the destabilization of relations with the colony, oral tradition claims that Jongumsobomvu refused to go to war to protect the axe thief. However,

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<sup>82</sup>Basil le Cordeur, (ed), The War of the Axe (Johannesburg, 1981).

there is every reason to believe that Maqoma did initially resist the European onslaught. Calderwood would claim at the end of the war that Kona and Namba led the harassing parties which, in the opening days of the conflict, had pursued Somerset's defeated column out of the Amatolas. However, given this missionary's many false statements, some of which will be addressed shortly, this is questionable. According to several colonial witnesses, in early May 1846 Maqoma and Kona, along with Bungala, their senior councillor, led nearly 1000 Jingqi warriors in an attack on the Mankazana Post. Wisely, Jongumsobomvu, who was seen directing the raid from horseback, ordered his men to avoid the entrenched firepower of the fort and seize the farmers' cattle. Bungala's division moved through the forests of the Waterkloof to raid isolated homesteads within the colony and only withdrew when a large force of burghers rode into the area. Years before, the chief had realized that the only way to fight Europeans was to elude their firearms and capture enough stock to ensure a food supply once the whites had burnt the Xhosa crops.<sup>83</sup> While Jongumsobomvu may have been a reluctant rebel, he still proved to be the best Xhosa tactician. With Sandile's success against Somerset's initial invasion, it was impossible for Maqoma to ignore the frustrated elements within his chiefdom who advocated resistance.

By the end of June Jongumsobomvu became extremely worried about the continuation of hostilities with the colony. Earlier in the month 500 Ndlambe warriors of Chief Mhala had crossed the open terrain of the Gwangqa River in broad daylight and were surprised by several hundred charging British dragoons. Helpless to defend themselves against the horses, swords, and firearms, 300 Xhosa men were slain. Shocked by the

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<sup>83</sup>For oral traditions see interviews with Chief Lent Maqoma, Mr. W. Ngqabavu, and Mr. J. Mncono. The idea that Jongumsobomvu did not fight in 1846 most likely originates in his early retirement from the conflict. For Calderwood's claim see (CA) GH 8/46, Undated Report on the Gaika Tribes. For the attack on Mankazana Post see Eastern Province Herald, 16 May 1846, p. 4. In light of Maqoma's Waterkloof campaign of 1850-53 this report seems credible.

news of this debacle, most Xhosa raiding parties withdrew from colonial territory. Additionally, Maitland had arrived from Cape Town with British reinforcements and planned to renew the offensive. The colonial army now consisted of 3200 regular troops, 5500 armed settlers, 800 Khoi levies, and 4000 Fingo and Khoi labourers.<sup>84</sup> Magoma knew all too well that this force was overwhelmingly superior and could wreak havoc in Xhosaland.

Jongumsobomvu desired a separate peace. Throughout July and August, the chief gathered his people in the bush around their abandoned kraals and sent female messengers to Fort Beaufort requesting a cessation of hostilities. The colonial press reported that Magoma "was raging like a wounded buffalo against the young chiefs for bringing on such a war" and promised Colonel Hare that in exchange for peace he would return all the captured colonial stock. Since the planting season was fast passing away, it was essential to prevent a general European invasion. As he had not been defeated in battle nor raided seriously by the colonials, Jongumsobomvu thought he could negotiate from a position of relative strength. Establishing his own treaty with the colony would also guarantee complete Jingqi autonomy from Sandile. Dismayed by the Gwangqa defeat, the paramount sent simultaneous peace overtures to the whites. However, Maitland had permission from Lord Grey, the Colonial Secretary in London, to ensure frontier stability by conquering Xhosaland. As a result, Magoma's messengers were driven away from the British camps and both his and Sandile's pleas were ignored.<sup>85</sup> The invasion would proceed.

While Somerset ravaged Phato's country to the south, in early

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<sup>84</sup>For the Battle of Gwanga see South African Commercial Advertiser, 13 June 1846; Gordon-Brown, The Narrative of Buck Adams, pp. 150-156. For Maitland see Milton, The Edges of War, p. 165.

<sup>85</sup>For the messages see Eastern Province Herald, 4, 16, and 25 July, 15, 22, and 29 August 1846; and (CL) MS 14,313, War Diary of James Brownlee, 1 September 1846. For Grey see Galbraith, Reluctant Empire, pp. 212-216.

August Hare led an expedition against the Ngqika. Remaining elusive, the Xhosa watched as the exhausted soldiers and settlers combed the steep slopes and thick bush of the Amatolas. The Ngqika would not fight. When Hare's men withdrew to the colony without scoring the decisive victory Maitland had desired, Stockenstrom, who was in command of the burgher forces, orchestrated a cattle raid against the neutral Gcaleka east of the Kei River. Despite this additional food supply, the governor's army, by September, was fatigued and demoralized. However, as the colonial operations did prevent the Ciskeian Xhosa from sowing their crops, starvation seemed imminent.<sup>86</sup>

Suffering from dysentery, Magoma, on the seventeenth of September, approached the newly reoccupied Fort Cox with a white flag of truce and proposed peace on behalf of all the Xhosa chiefs. Once Colonel Campbell, the commander of the post, had corresponded with Maitland, a conference was organized for the first week of October. All the Ngqika chiefs, including Sandile and Jongumsobomvu, gathered at Block Drift to hear the governor's terms. Colonels Johnstone and Campbell, and the Reverend Calderwood, who had become Maitland's personal advisor on the eastern frontier, informed their Xhosa adversaries that the governor demanded the surrender of all firearms and colonial stock, and the forfeiture of all land west of the Kei. Although Magoma was sick of the futile war and seemed willing to agree to these conditions, the other chiefs refused to relinquish their firearms and they all returned to their kraals to plant the desperately needed crops.<sup>87</sup>

Immediately, Maitland launched numerous patrols against the Rharhabe and Gqunukhwebe to burn their villages and disturb the sowing.

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<sup>86</sup>Milton, The Edges of War, pp. 166-167.

<sup>87</sup>Grahamstown Journal, 19 September 1846; and Eastern Province Herald, 10 October 1846.

To enable his subjects to plant their crops, an ill Maqoma with 200 retainers met Colonel Johnstone at Block Drift in late October and delivered a small quantity of cattle and firearms. Peace was essential. On the third of November Jongumsobomvu, along with a considerable number of followers, returned to Block Drift and surrendered officially to Governor Maitland who demanded that he move all the Jingqi to the east bank of the Tyume and produce more stock and guns within a week. Complying with the governor's orders, the chief began leading his subjects out of the old Ceded Territory and sent eighty horses to Fort Beaufort. The movement of so many homesteads from the Kat to the Tyume further disrupted planting activities. Although Sandile also desired peace and sent Tsili, the axe thief, to the British, the paramount refused to surrender any stock, firearms or land. In turn, many young Jingqi, frustrated with the failure of their chief to prevent colonial dispossession, defected to the paramount. Afraid of retaliation by Sandile and weakened by worsening dysentery, Maqoma and 130 followers, on the eleventh of the month, went to live at the colonial camp near Block Drift. Since Kona and Namba remained with their personal subjects to supervise cultivation, the former became the de facto Jingqi ruler.<sup>88</sup>

As Maitland's administrative incompetence had disorganized and demoralized his army, and the Ngqika were busy planting, the conflict seemed to have reached a stalemate. In fact, the governor wrote to London that he would not resume operations in the Amatola region. Another cattle raid against Sarhili's Gcaleka in December was the only thing which kept the colonial soldiers from starving. Many settlers abandoned the campaign and went home to their farms. Predictably, on the sixth of January 1847 Maitland received a dispatch from a displeased Colonial Office recalling

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<sup>88</sup>This paragraph is based on Grahamstown Journal, 24 and 31 October 1846; Eastern Province Herald, 24 October and 7 November 1846; (CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 3, 6, 9, 10, and 13 November 1846. During this time Laing was at Fort Beaufort.



him to London.<sup>89</sup>

While the new governor, Sir Henry Pottinger, sailed for the Cape, a dejected Jongumsobomvu lived in a shack on the fringe of Maitland's camp at Block Drift which had been dubbed Fort Hare. According to Harriet Ward, the wife of a British officer, Maqoma:

began his usual career of drunkenness, maltreating his wives, and, in a fit of passion, striking one of his children dead out of its mother's arms! At times, he is in a perfectly frantic state, riding wildly about the neighbourhood of the general's camp, in an old uniform.<sup>90</sup>

Ward ignores the fact that the chief was provided with a constant supply of alcohol by the British commanders, including her husband, who threatened to shoot him if he left the post. On one occasion Jongumsobomvu was beaten by a group of white soldiers who accused him of attempting to steal their money. Shortly after, Maqoma slipped out of the camp but was arrested, detained at Fort Armstrong and returned to Fort Hare. When Kona and Namba, in early April, moved their followers around Maitland's camp in order to display their submission to the colony, the officers rapidly moved the Jingqi chief and his small retinue away to Fort Beaufort. Confined to the military hospital, Maqoma was prescribed "a large quantity of brandy daily and as much tobacco as he can consume". Nothonto, who had been forbidden to see her son, assisted the chief in another unsuccessful escape attempt.<sup>91</sup> Expecting the new governor to renew hostilities, the British officers did not want Jongumsobomvu,

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<sup>89</sup>Milton, The Edges of War, p. 169.

<sup>90</sup>Harriet Ward, Five Years in Kaffirland (London, 1848), p. 86.

<sup>91</sup>For the supply of alcohol see (CA) GH 8/46, Calderwood to H. Woosnam, 1 July 1847. For the supply of liquor and the move to Fort Beaufort see Eastern Province Herald, 3 April 1847. For Maqoma as a prisoner see Ward, Five Years, p. 123. For the beating see Eastern Province Herald, 2 January 1847. For Kona and Namba see (CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 2 April 1847; and (CA) GH 8/46, Calderwood to Secretary to the High Commissioner, 17 April 1847. For the attempted escape from Fort Beaufort see (CA) GH 8/46, Bouchard to Calderwood, 27 June 1847.

renowned as the best Xhosa tactician, in a position of authority.

By early August Pottinger had arrived on the frontier and using the pretext of some stolen goats, he declared Sandile a rebel. Preparing an invasion force, the governor recruited settlers with the promise that they could keep all captured stock. With another campaign against the Ngqika about to begin, Maqoma's presence at Fort Beaufort was considered a threat to colonial security. When Colonel Campbell informed the chief that he was to be moved to Algoa Bay, he stretched his hand toward the Kat River and said:

Here, my father, a great chief, dwelt; these  
pastures were crowded with cattle, here I have  
lived to grow old; here my children have been  
born: let me die in peace where I have so long  
lived.

At that point one of Jongumsobomvu's daughters, Amakeya, pleaded with Campbell to take her as a concubine instead of exiling her father from his beloved country. The colonel refused and Maqoma, along with eighty retainers, nine wives, 100 cattle and twenty horses, left Fort Beaufort in mid-September escorted by Mr. G. Cyrus, a government interpreter. Covering up his own role in aggression against the Xhosa, Calderwood, who had replaced Stretch as government agent to the Ngqika, wrote to his LMS superiors that Jongumsobomvu had asked voluntarily to live at Algoa Bay. In fact, this failed missionary had actually recommended to the governor that Maqoma be detained within the colony and supported his case by claiming that "several medical men had declared him insane". Calderwood failed to mention that these were the same Fort Beaufort physicians who had prescribed the Jingqi ruler as much alcohol as he could drink. However, the dissatisfaction expressed by the chief and his daughter indicates that they did not want to leave their country. On the road to Grahamstown, the depressed Maqoma moved so slowly that his party travelled a mere one mile a day. Such a large train of Xhosa gathered around the famous chief that British dragoons had to drive them away. Arriving in

the Fingo village outside Port Elizabeth at the end of the month, Jongumsobomvu was placed under the supervision of the local Resident Magistrate and supposedly spent a considerable amount of time drowning his sorrows with brandy.<sup>92</sup>

There is little doubt that between 1836 and 1846 Maqoma indulged in colonial alcohol and became periodically intoxicated. Given the stress of his life there were occasions when liquor became a relief and this must have increased as the unwanted war with the colony seemed more and more unavoidable. Unfortunately, the settler press and other white writers attempted to deride the chief by exaggerations, misrepresentations, and fabrications. Subsequent histories have tended to portray Jongumsobomvu as an unstable drunkard who retired from "the War of the Axe" because he longed for the taste of brandy.<sup>93</sup> Everyone who witnessed Maqoma's drinking habits had something to gain from exaggeration. Adams's account has already been discredited as the self-serving memoirs of an aging soldier trying to dehumanize his former enemy. Calderwood's complaints regarding the chief's presence in the Fort Beaufort canteen only began after his attempts to convert Jongumsobomvu and interfere in traditional government had failed. Similarly, Kayser, who never stated that Maqoma was actually drunk, used the chief's enjoyment of brandy to explain to his LMS superiors why a man who seemed to have been on the verge of conversion for a decade had moved away from Knapp's Hope. For these missionaries it was easier to attribute their failures to the evils of liquor rather than their own incompetence and credulity. No missionary wanted to admit that

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<sup>92</sup>For the order to move Maqoma see Ward, Five Years, pp. 178-179; For Calderwood's falsification see (CL) MS 17,048, Cory Notebook, Vol. IX, Report of Calderwood, August 1847 and (CA) GH 8/46, undated memorandum to government from Calderwood; For the trip to Port Elizabeth see Grahamstown Journal, 11 September 1846; Eastern Province herald, 16 and 25 September and 2 October 1846.

<sup>93</sup>See du Toit, "Maqoma"; Rivett-Carnac, Hawk's Eye, p. 129; Meintjes, Sandile, p. 157; Milton, The Edges of War, pp. 149 and 168; and Peires, The House of Phalo, pp. 129 and 243-244.

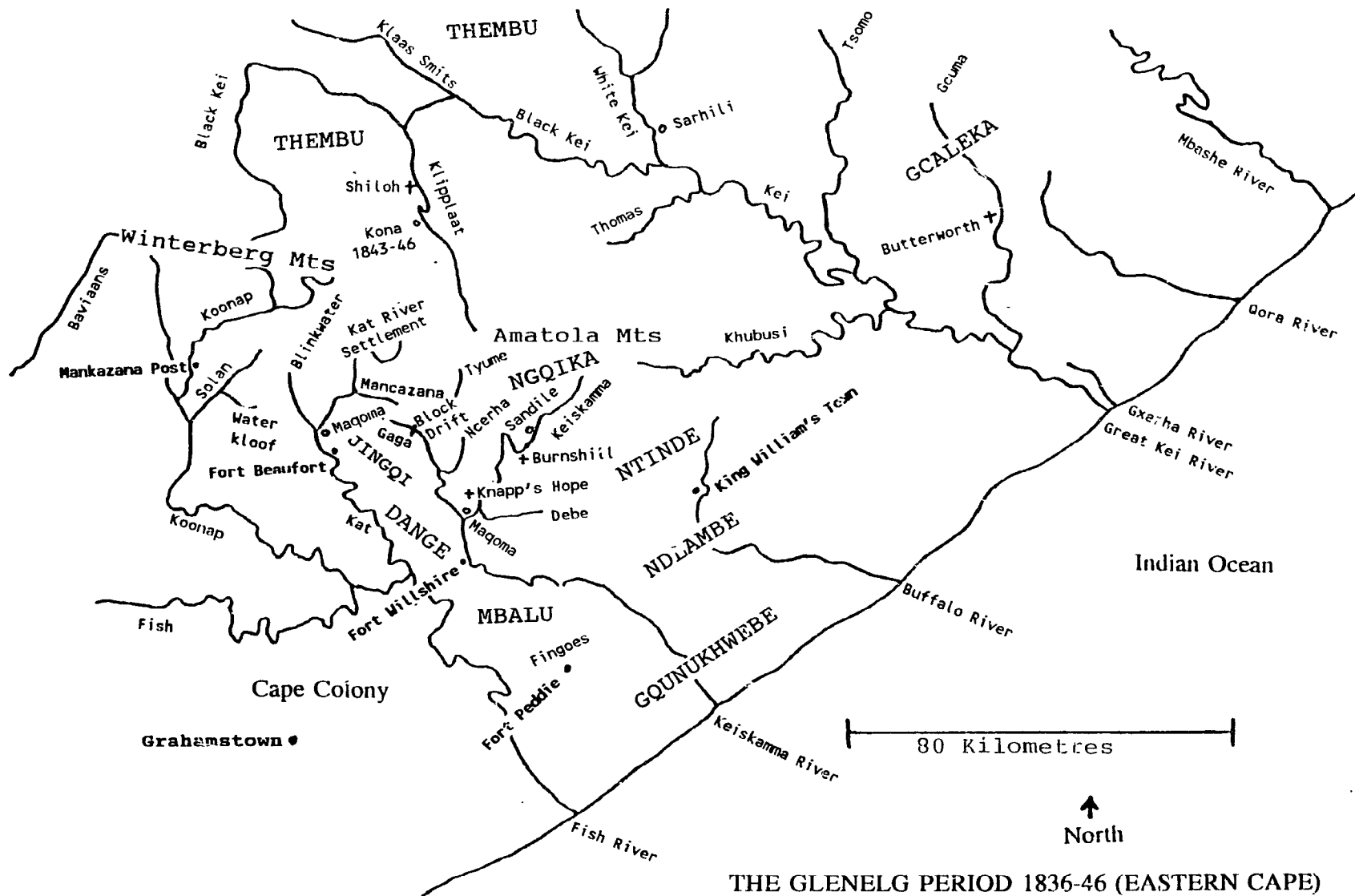
an African ruler had outwitted him by feigning interest in Christianity in order to gain a medium of communication with the powerful colony. It is interesting that Laing, who had known Jongumsobomvu since 1831, never wrote about the chief's drinking. It must also be understood that these Protestant clergymen thought that the consumption of alcohol in any quantity was a most damning sin. However, not all missionaries condemned the chief. Laing lived at Block Drift during late 1846 when Harriet Ward was describing Magoma's alleged drunken rampages but the missionary's journal mentions none of these incidents. If the chief had indeed killed his own child then Laing, who wrote prolifically in his diary, would have been outraged and recorded the event. Ward's book was published after the eventual conquest of the Xhosa in late 1847 and must be seen as a justification for white rule. Additionally, the memoirs of A.W. Cole portray Magoma, just prior to "the War of the Axe", as a drunkard, "a thief, a sot, a liar, and, in some respects, a coward." The author then added "And such is the Kafir!" However, Cole wrote his account while Jongumsobomvu was conducting his famous guerrilla insurgency against the British from 1850 to 1853. and is therefore unreliable war propaganda. Ironically, Cole contradicts himself by stating that the chief never kept alcohol at his kraal.<sup>94</sup> Both Ward and Cole were so overtly racist, even by nineteenth century standards, that they must be read with suspicion. Even Tyali's deathbed statement of 1842 must be seen as an attempt to discredit Magoma who was threatening to absorb the former's chiefdom and usurp the young and weak Sandile. The accounts of those who did not slander Jongumsobomvu in this fashion are quite revealing. Both the Reverends Laing and Ross never mention the subject. Stretch, who interacted with Magoma for over ten years, recorded only one incident where the chief consumed liquor and described him as an able ruler and skilled diplomat. Jongumsobomvu's drinking during this period began by opportunistic British officers plying him with liquor and ended with him

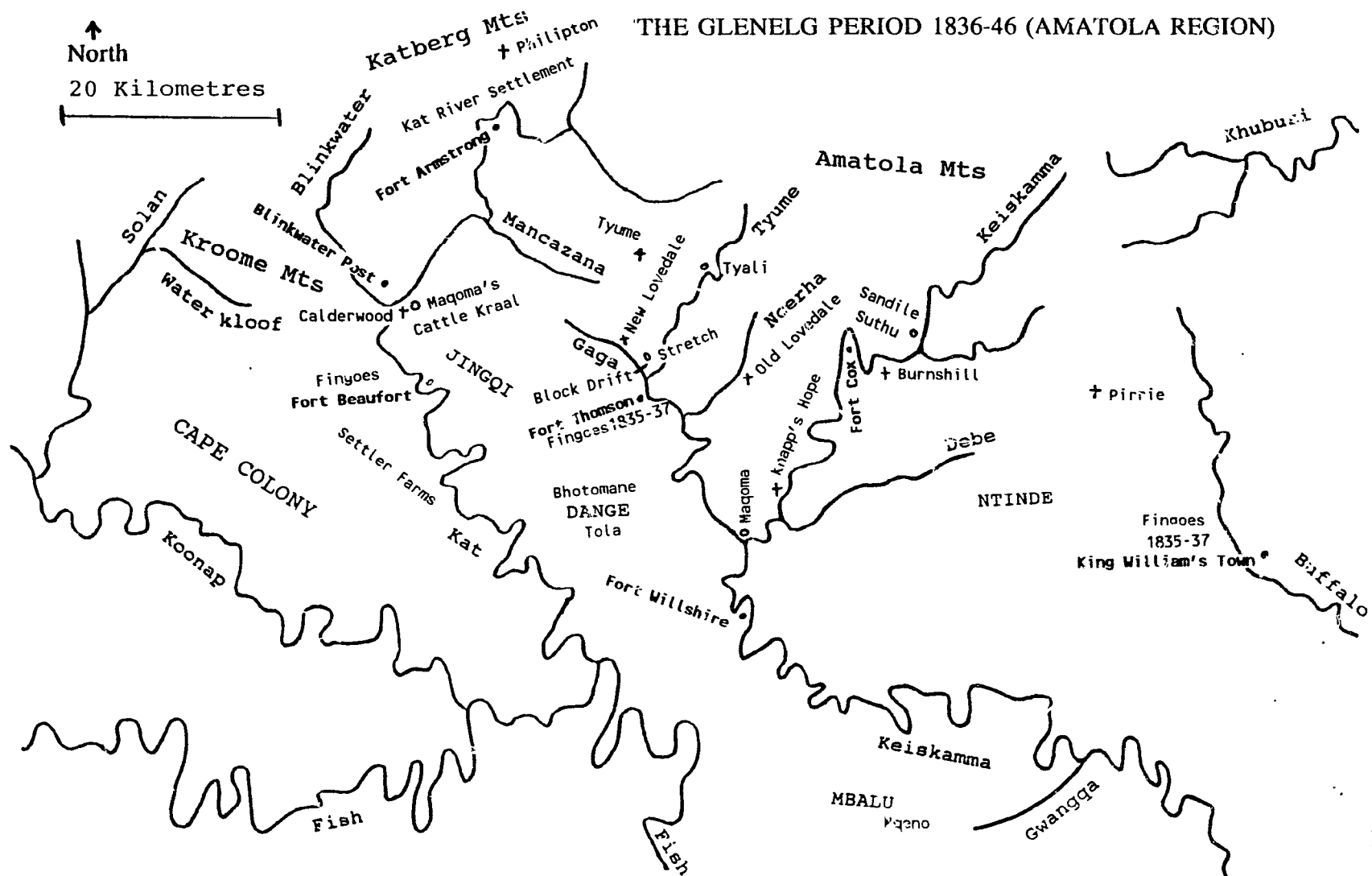
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<sup>94</sup>Cole, The Cape and the Kafirs, pp. 174-184.

as a prisoner who was kept drunk as a form of neutralization.

After the retrocession of Queen Adelaide Province in 1836/37, Maqoma was determined to maintain the Stockenström treaty as the only way to prevent European aggression against his people. While the alternatives of the patrol system and colonial rule were abhorrent, resistance had been futile. As the Rharhabe regent, Jongumsobomvu interacted intelligently with the powerful colony and was responsible for a long period of peace along the frontier. However, with the rise of the inexperienced Sandile to the paramountcy and Governor Maitland's abrupt cancellation of the treaty system in 1844, the situation deteriorated. No Xhosa ruler could permit colonial raiders to pillage freely. War was inevitable. Maitland's removal of mission Xhosa from traditional rule forced Jongumsobomvu to turn away from the missionaries as they suddenly represented a serious threat to chiefly authority. The so-called "emancipation" of the Fingoes in 1835 and Governor D'Urban's attack on chiefly power in 1835/36 had made that issue particularly sensitive. Maqoma was in an awkward situation. In the mid-1840's he was angry with both the whites and the young Xhosa warriors for destabilizing what he considered as an acceptable frontier system. Lacking a sympathetic ear within colonial circles and unable to discourage Sandile's confrontationalist policy which threatened to bring about another European onslaught, Jongumsobomvu failed to shield his Jingqi chiefdom from the ravages of invasion in 1846. Sandile had been a mere boy during the conquest of 1835 and was determined to repeat the mistakes of his much older half-brother. Early capitulation during "the War of the Axe" and subsequent exile to Port Elizabeth seemed to signify Maqoma's decline from public prominence.





## Chapter Five

### "The Leopard & Fordyce": Magoma's Return (1847-53)

In a prosperous home in Port Elizabeth's black township of New Brighton, three elderly councillors of Chief Lent Magoma sat in large, comfortable armchairs across from myself and Wonga. In a dream they claimed to have seen us approaching and because of the omen agreed to reveal their deepest historical secrets. Before proceeding, one of our hosts issued a stern warning that we in turn, would consequently assume a duty to report anyone who contradicted their version of the oral traditions concerning the original Magoma. Shifting slightly in his chair, another grey-haired gentleman, weathered and lean, launched into a proud and animated tale of how Jongumsobomvu and his warriors had fought the British - hit and run, strike and flee - throughout the thick forests of Mtontsi. While settling back comfortably, we listened to the Xhosa version of the Waterkloof campaign of the Anglo-Xhosa war of 1850-53 whose British interpretation had become familiar from documents, books and newspapers. Once our hosts had concluded their captivating tales, their spokesman offered to guide us to the little known battle sites of Magoma's guerrilla struggle against the colonials and where even to this day "you will find human skulls". From their collective expressions, it became clear that a great privilege was being conferred.

Our pilgrimage began early. With the three elders, we drove up a steep and winding dirt road a few kilometres north of Fort Beaufort. On either side of the track plunged deep ravines covered by the thickest and most tangled forest anywhere in South Africa. This was Mtontsi. Reaching the open plateau and brisk air of the high summit, it became obvious that hundreds of people could live completely concealed and comfortably hidden in the valleys under the dense treetop canopy. Additionally, in the far distance and beyond the kloofs, we could easily see the town of Fort



Beaufort and hundreds of square kilometres of clear, rolling terrain which surrounded the elevated forest sanctuary. Scrambling from the automobile with greater agility than one might expect from man of such advanced age, our veteran comrades led us down a rock covered slope to the edge of the bush, indicating solemnly even reverently, the very spot where Maqoma had gained his praise "the leopard of Fordyce" by the shooting the British commander of that name. Later we came upon a square pile of stones which they identified as Fordyce's grave. As in a dream, the forests seemed to echo shrilly with "Johnny, bring stretcher" and again faint and distant, "Johnny, bring stretcher". Strangely, upon visiting the ruins of what had once been a small British fort a forest warden appeared. In his office he informed us, were located the remains of a Xhosa warrior which had been found recently in a cave in one of the ravines. Entering the small forestry cottage we saw a dirty skull, other bones and a hardened, brittle kaross made of animal hide all spread out on a long table as if in a mortuary. In a hushed whisper, but with obvious emotion and a touch of pride the most outspoken councillor softly murmured, "Did I not tell you we would find bones in Maqoma's forest?"

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Exiled to Port Elizabeth, the famous Maqoma felt degraded and despondent. With his wives and young children, the balding chief lived in a poorly constructed hut surrounded by many Fingo homes of larger size. It must have been embarrassing for such a famous aristocrat to be scorned by former subjects who had deserted traditional society to work within the colony. When George Angus, a British journalist, drew a portrait of Jongumsobomvu, he noted that the chief "appeared dejected and melancholy. Poor old man! In his tattered kaross, it was difficult to recognize the son of Gaika." Although forty nine years of age, the troubled chief seemed much older. Noxlana, Maqoma's Thembu Great Wife and mother of

Namba, and Nofelete, his daughter-in-law, spent the long days smoking their pipes and caring for the downcast patriarch at whom the settlers jeered as "a great sot".<sup>1</sup>

Throughout September 1847 Governor Pottinger dispatched numerous patrols into the Amatolas to disrupt Ngqika cultivation. Realizing that further resistance would be futile, Sandile arranged a peace conference in late October with the British. Escorted by John Bisset, a settler who had been involved in Hintsa's murder in 1835, the paramount and his councillors rode first to King William's Town and then on to Grahamstown. There was no doubt Sandile believed he was travelling to a peace conference under the protection of a flag of truce. However, upon arriving at Grahamstown's Drostdy Barracks, the Ngqika King was pushed unceremoniously into a small, dark cell. He was a prisoner. With the Amatolas pacified, during November and December Pottinger launched continuous raids against the Gqunukhwebe which compelled Phato's surrender in order to prevent his subjects from starving.<sup>2</sup> "The War of the Axe" had ended.

On the morning of December fourteenth, Maqoma heard rumours that a new governor had arrived in Port Elizabeth by ship. Riding to the centre of town, the chief noticed a large crowd of settlers gathered outside the Phoenix Hotel. After observing Jongumsobomvu from one of the hotel windows, the governor emerged from the building and to the chief's horror and disbelief, Hintsa's murderer, Harry Smith, had become the new ruler of

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<sup>1</sup>George French Angus, The Kaffirs Illustrated in a Series of Drawings Taken Among the AmaZulu, AmaPondo, and AmaKosa Tribes (London, 1849), pp. 21-22. Eastern Province Herald, 2 October 1847.

<sup>2</sup>For correspondence relating to the final campaigns see le Cordeur and Saunders, The War of the Axe, chap. 7. For Sandile's capture see J. Bisset, Sport and War, or Recollections of fighting and Hunting in South Africa From the Years 1834 to 1867 (London, 1875), p. 124; and Brownlee, Reminiscences, pp. 293-294.

the Cape Colony. Smith, who had won fame and a knighthood fighting Sikhs at Aliwal in India, approached Magoma in a friendly manner but at the last minute the governor grasped his sword and drew it partially from its scabbard. Startled by this sudden menace, Jongumsobomvu pulled back and was ridiculed loudly by the crowd of settlers. With a silent and sarcastic smile, Sir Harry retired to the hotel.

That afternoon, Smith summoned Magoma and an interpreter to the Phoenix. When the chief offered to shake hands with the governor, the latter knocked him to the floor. Her Majesty's newest representative could hardly be described as the epitome of upper class Victorian gentility. Placing his boot on Jongumsobomvu's throat and brandishing a sword over his head, Smith yelled, "This is to teach you that I have come hither to teach Kaffirland that I am chief and master here and in this way I shall treat the enemies of the Queen!" Although terrified, the chief snarled in retort, "You are a dog and so you behave like a dog. This thing was not sent by Victoria who knows that I am of royal blood like herself." Applying more pressure to Magoma's neck, Her Majesty's representative stated that because of the war the chiefs had forfeited everything they possessed.<sup>3</sup> As Jongumsobomvu staggered out of the hotel attempting to catch his breath, he must have feared that the governor intended to renew his policy from 1835 which sought to eradicate the traditional authority of the Xhosa chiefs.

Shortly after Sir Harry had assaulted Magoma, the former sent one of the chief's councillors to Fort Hare with a message for the acting Jingqi ruler. After a three-day ride, the elder informed Kona that the new governor required his presence at King William's Town for a conference

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<sup>3</sup>These two paragraphs are based on Eastern Province Herald, 18 December 1847; and The South African Commercial Advertiser, 22 December 1847. Magoma's response was not recorded in the settler press but remembered in oral tradition, see Mqhayi, Ityala lamaWele, p. 109.

with all the major chiefs. Since Jongumsobomvu's Right-Hand son had been a freshly initiated young man during the colonial invasion of 1835, he remembered with apprehension the volatile and violent Smith. Both Kona and Namba had been doing their utmost to cooperate with the new colonial agent at Fort Hare, the Reverend Henry Calderwood, and had managed to secure some of the cattle seized from Sandile's people<sup>4</sup> which helped compensate for losses sustained during the early part of "the War of the Axe".

On the twenty-third of December Sandile, who had just been released from detention, Anta, Suthu, and Kona of the Ngqika; Bhotomane and Tola of the Dange; Mhala, Siyolo and Siwani of the Ndlambe; along with Tshatshu of the Ntinde and Phato of the Gqunukhwebe, met at King William's Town. They were the major rulers of Ciskeian Xhosaland. Riding into the recently re-occupied British post which he had founded eleven years earlier, Sir Harry addressed the chiefs. Presenting them with two staves, one representing war and the other peace, the theatrical governor asked the Xhosa rulers to indicate their preference. Since several hundred colonial soldiers were present, it was hardly surprising that the chiefs unanimously and enthusiastically embraced the latter. In turn, Smith announced that the old Ceded Territory was to be cleared of all Xhosa, annexed to the Cape Colony, and settled by whites. Additionally, he claimed all the land between the Keiskamma and Kei rivers as the protectorate of British Kaffraria. Within this area the Xhosa aristocrats were no longer permitted to levy fines upon their subjects while witchcraft executions were outlawed, and European commissioners would supervise the chiefdoms. While this was an unspeakable affront to traditional authority, the defeated chiefs had no option other than "to kiss" the governor's boots and acquiesce meekly to his proclamation. Queen Adelaide Province had

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<sup>4</sup>For the message to Kona see Eastern Province Herald, 18 December 1847. For Kona and Namba with Calderwood see (CA) GH 8/46, Calderwood to Secretary to the High Commissioner, 18 September, 6 and 13 October 1847.

been reborn. A few days later Colonel George MacKinnon, a recent arrival in South Africa, was appointed Chief Commissioner of British Kaffraria, his immediate subordinates being Captain John Maclean, commissioner to the Gqunukhwebe and Ndlambe, and young Charles Brownlee, commissioner to the Ngqika. As the son of the pioneering missionary John Brownlee, the latter had been an interpreter for nearly ten years, knew all the Xhosa chiefs and had established an official residence at Fort Cox.<sup>5</sup> Colonial rule had begun.

With the extension of British hegemony over western Xhosaland, in February 1848 Maqoma was permitted to return to his people who were living on the east bank of the Tyume near Fort Hare. During the subsequent months he made four visits to Fort Beaufort and one to Grahamstown. Although the purpose of these trips remains obscure, there is no colonial report of Jongumsobomvu indulging in alcohol during this period and it seems likely that he was attempting to retrieve his scattered followers who had gone into the colony during the last war. The colonial conquest had left the Jingqi chiefdom devastated and depopulated. While Maqoma had led roughly 17,000 subjects in 1836, by 1848 he ruled only 2,066 people who cared for 2,034 cattle. At the same time Sandile, who had also controlled 17,000 people before 1846, administered 14,915 followers and 10,583 cattle.<sup>6</sup> Despite their early capitulation to the colonial invaders, the Jingqi had sustained greater losses than the chiefdoms which had continued to resist. Many of Maqoma's people had deserted. Those who desired sanctuary had fled to the colonial Fingo reserves while men who

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<sup>5</sup>Robert Godlonton and Edward Irving, Narrative of the Kaffir War of 1850-52 (Grahamstown, 1852), pp. 63-67. PP, C.969 of 1847-48, Papers re. Kaffirs, pp. 48-53. Ward, Five Years, p. 327. Brownlee's correspondence constitutes one of the best written sources on the Xhosa during the late 1840's and all of the 1850's.

<sup>6</sup>For Maqoma's return see (CA) BK 432, Charles Brownlee to Colonel George MacKinnon, 9 November 1849. For the Jingqi population see (CA) GH 8/24, Gaika Census 1848.

wanted to fight had rallied around other chiefs. On several occasions in June, Jongumsobomvu attempted to move his remaining followers to the west bank of the Tyume but had been expelled repeatedly by colonial police. Desperate to regain his stolen land in the old Ceded Territory, Maqoma applied for permission to establish his chiefdom around Blinkwater. This was denied. That area had been ear-marked for settler farms.<sup>7</sup> Placating the Europeans had failed. Passive cooperation seemed useless. Jongumsobomvu's frustration grew.

Colonial authority swept quickly over British Kaffraria. The commissioners' decisions were enforced by 2000 British and Khoi soldiers and several hundred Xhosa police. Under European hegemony, many Xhosa became wage-labourers either within the growing white communities of British Kaffraria such as King William's Town and East London or inside the colony. As the Rharhabe were evicted from the west bank of the Tyume, settlers took their place. The white villages of Woburn, Auckland and Juanasberg were established in the Amatola foothills on the border of the British protectorate. Simultaneously, Fingo locations around Fort Hare and the nearby town of Alice were expanded. Within occupied Xhosaland roads and bridges were built and military posts enlarged. As an increasing number of Xhosa flocked to the missions and were provided with seeds and ploughs, the traditional pastoral aristocracy became destabilized and almost irrelevant. The Xhosa were becoming dependent upon the commissioners for their administration and colonial police for law and order, the settlers for economic support and missionaries for the ideology which provided rationale for the new order. Recognizing this trend, Maqoma would never renew his friendship with the missionaries and

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<sup>7</sup>(CA) GH 14/47, MacKinnon to Smith, 29 June 1848.

forbade his people to visit their stations.<sup>8</sup> Since the chiefs had lost their two main levers of social control - cattle repossession and witchcraft execution - their power and legitimacy began a swift and steep decline.

Destruction of crops and herds during the last war had caused hunger within the Ngqika population and stock thefts from the colony multiplied. According to Brownlee, Kona let his subjects steal from the settlers in order to become more popular than Namba, the legitimate heir to Maqoma's chieftaincy who still sought to cooperate with the Europeans.<sup>9</sup> On the seventh of October 1848 Smith summoned the chiefs to King William's Town and ordered Sandile to explain a supposed increase in cattle rustling from the settlers. Although the paramount called upon Jongumsobomvu to provide one of his eloquent orations, the governor screamed "I called upon you Sandilli, and not upon Mocomo!" The Rharhabe aristocrats sat silently as Smith threatened them with military retaliation if the alleged depredations did not cease. Brownlee reported that while his area was tranquil, the Jingqi had been responsible for all rustling and other thefts. On many occasions Jingqi men who were accused of stealing food from military posts were sentenced summarily to over thirty lashes.<sup>10</sup> With colonial power increasing and traditional authority waning, Jongumsobomvu's situation was becoming untenable to a serious degree. Certainly the scope for negotiations remained limited as long as Sir Harry held supreme power over his and his people's lives.

In February 1849 Kona had one of his subjects, Pantsi, smelt out

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<sup>8</sup>For colonial rule see Milton, The Edges of War, pp. 177-178. For Maqoma and the missionaries see (CL) MS, 16,579, Journal of Laing, 11 August 1849.

<sup>9</sup>(CA) GH 14/47, Brownlee to MacKinnon, 3 July 1848.

<sup>10</sup>Eastern Province Herald, 14 October 1848.

for sorcery and tortured to death. Charles Brownlee investigated the matter and imprisoned several individuals who had been involved including a junior son of Maqoma, Ned<sup>11</sup> and a female witchfinder, Thata. While the commissioner could not assemble enough evidence to indict Kona, it was clear to both aristocrats and commoners that the colonial regime would enforce its ban on such executions. In late March 1849 Maqoma and Namba travelled east of the Kei to visit Sarhili, the nominal paramount of all the Xhosa chiefdoms. Residing at the Gcaleka Great Place with Nomsa, the paramount's mother, until June, Jongumsobomvu sought advice concerning what to do about colonial dominance in his country. Although the results of these talks are not known, it is likely that the possibility of further resistance was discussed. However, given subsequent events Sarhili and Nomsa probably did not promise to assist Maqoma in a revolt against the British.<sup>12</sup>

In the opening weeks of 1850 another serious drought began to ravage British Kaffraria. Ensuring their own survival, Xhosa aristocrats ignored the colonial laws and repossessed royal cattle from the hungry commoners who consequently became enraged.<sup>13</sup> Suddenly, within the famished Xhosa masses the prophet Mlanjeni rocketed to public popularity. Originating from a common Ndlambe family within the chiefdom of the pro-colonial Mqhayi, Mlanjeni predicted that if the Xhosa eradicated all witchcraft and sacrificed cattle the whites would be overthrown and

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<sup>11</sup>It has already been determined that Ned Maqoma might have been Imfazwe, Maqoma's son who was raised by Charles Lennox Stretch in the 1830's. In 1856 Ned Maqoma was employed as an interpreter at a native hospital in King William's Town.

<sup>12</sup>For the execution see (CA) GH 14/47, Mackinnon to Smith, 2 July 1849. For the execution and Maqoma's visit to Sarhili see (CA) BK 432, Brownlee to MacKinnon, 17 February, 16 and 23 March, 21 May, 20 June, 2 August, 20 September, 16 October, 9 and 10 November 1849. During the Ngqika revolt of 1850-53 the Gcaleka remained neutral.

<sup>13</sup>D.H. Vardy and H.M. Mathews (eds.), The Cape Journals of Arch-Deacon N.J. Merriman 1848-55 (Cape Town, 1956), p. 126.



expelled. With chiefs unable to control the religious forces, an outbreak of witchcraft accusations wracked the traditional aristocracy. Maclean and Brownlee had both noticed these disturbances within the chiefdoms of British Kaffraria. Colonial rule had caused traditional Xhosa society to enter a phase of self-destruction which Mlanjeni sought to halt by calling for the eradication of sorcery. Furthermore, the chiefs and aristocrats had to be compelled to take responsibility for the nation's plight. When thousands of Xhosa cried out "Mlanjeni, our chief" and slaughtered royal cattle, they were striking against the economic foundations of a failed political class.<sup>14</sup> Religious leadership coming from the commoner masses aimed to seize the initiative from the impotent royals and aristocrats. Obviously, many commoners had become aware that the fragmentation of the aristocrats propelled by personal ambitions had become a major flaw and weakness in confronting and resisting the greatest threat ever to face the Xhosa nation. New leadership totally outside the ruling factions had become necessary. Consequently, the cry "Mlanjeni, our chief".

Maqoma recognized that the slaughter of royal cattle by commoners was a direct manifestation of Smith's plan to usurp chiefly authority. Surely it was Sir Harry's dream come true. Since colonial regulations had restricted the coercive power of the Xhosa rulers, the growing movement seemed unstoppable. In southern British Kaffraria, Mhala and Phato secured their dominant positions by seeking European support. Conversely, Jongumsobomvu thought it best to manipulate the young and inexperienced Mlanjeni to mobilize the masses in a rebellion against colonial hegemony

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<sup>14</sup>For the commissioners see (CA) GH 14/49, MacKinnon to Smith, 25 October 1849; and (CA) BK 432, Brownlee to MacKinnon, 18 February 1850. For Mlanjeni see Peires, The Dead Will Arise, pp.1-4. While Peires identified Mlanjeni as a precursor to the Cattle-Killing of 1856-7, he did not recognize the anti-royalist nature of his movement. In the wake of colonial conquest indigenous societies often reject their failed political leaders in favour of religious prophets. See A.F.C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements: Some Theoretical Considerations for their Comparative Study", American Anthropologist, 1, VIII (1956), p. 266; and A.J.F. Kobben, "Prophetic Movements as an Expression of Social Protest", International Archives of Ethnology, IX (1960), p. 150.

which would remove restrictions on cattle-based feudalism and restore royal legitimacy. Sandile concurred and the two rival half-brothers put their differences aside in order to work toward their mutual interest of salvaging chiefly authority. If they could not halt the national hysteria, they might co-opt it. Throughout 1850 Maqoma and his agents visited every Xhosa chiefdom in British Kaffraria urging the people to seek the advice of the prophet regarding a combined attack on the Europeans. In September representatives from most Xhosa groups assembled in the Amatolas where Mlanjeni predicted that Jongumsobomvu would lead them in an attack on the colony in order to recapture their stolen land.<sup>15</sup> The premier role Maqoma had been assigned by the visions indicated his influence over the prophet.

Jongumsobomvu covertly prepared for war. Observing the gradual withdrawal of British troops from his area, the chief knew there would be no better time to rebel.<sup>16</sup> Through decades of experience he knew the value of firearms in a campaign against the Europeans, and his people, inspired by Mlanjeni's words, had illegally acquired these weapons from white traders. In late September 1850 the colonial Xhosa police discovered several muskets in a Jingqi kraal and Brownlee, who kept reporting optimistically that the Ngqika were tranquil, seized a single cow as a fine. To investigate unsettling rumours concerning Mlanjeni, Brownlee, in the first week of October, met all the Ngqika rulers and 150

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<sup>15</sup>For the killing of cattle in 1850 see (CL) MS 7764, John Ross to Byrce Ross, 27 May 1851; and (CL) MS 7773, J. Ross to B. Ross, 3 February 1851. For Maqoma and Mlanjeni see Godlonton and Irving, Narrative of the Kaffir War, pp. 11-15.

<sup>16</sup>In accordance with Earl Grey's desire for reduced military expenditure throughout the empire, from January 1847 to December 1850 Sir Harry Smith had willingly and unwisely decreased the number of British servicemen at the Cape from 5,774 to 3,699. PRO, CO 879/1, Report on the Kaffir War 12 November 1852, Appendix No. 4. For additional information on this imperial policy see Peter Burroughs, "Imperial Defence and the Victorian Army", Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, XV (1986), p. 60.

of their headmen and councillors. When the commissioner asked Sandile, Anta, and Xhoxho whether they had visited the prophet, the three half-brothers laughed nervously before denying the allegation. Obviously, they lied. Acknowledging that some of his warriors had spoken to Mlanjeni, Maqoma claimed that the Ngqika did not even have enough crops to satisfy their basic needs let alone to support a rebellion and that they were actually afraid of further colonial land seizure. Although Brownlee believed the Jingqi ruler, he suspected that the Ngqika chiefs enjoyed a much closer relationship with the prophet than they were admitting.<sup>17</sup> Because the British became convinced that the aristocrats were behind the movement, they failed to understand what appeared to them as the irrational behaviour of killing the cattle.

Troubled by reports of Mlanjeni's activities, Sir Harry arrived in British Kaffraria in late October and summoned the chiefs to King William's Town. When Sandile and Maqoma failed to attend the meeting, the governor officially declared the Ngqika paramount an outlaw and replaced him with Charles Brownlee who would administer through Suthu, Sandile's mother. Lacking a natural mountain fortress, chiefs Mhala of the Ndlambe and Phato of the Gqunukhwebe saw resistance as futile and swore allegiance to the British.<sup>18</sup> In turn, Sandile and many of his subjects hid themselves in the Amatola bush. A few weeks later the paramount, who had never been very strong willed, considered abandoning the plan and surrendering his firearms to Brownlee. Infuriated by this abrupt change of heart, Jongumsobomvu visited Sandile and claimed that "In the last war it was said Maqoma was mad, but in this war it will be seen that Maqoma is not mad!" Seemingly bolstered by the Jingqi chief's forceful words, the

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<sup>17</sup>This paragraph is based on (CA) BK 432, Brownlee to MacKinnon, 26 September and 11 October 1850.

<sup>18</sup>Grahamstown Journal, 3 and 9 November 1850.

young paramount vowed to continue to oppose the colonials.<sup>19</sup> Conflict appeared inevitable.

Throughout November, the Ngqika proceeded with their preparations for armed rebellion. MacKinnon reported that they were acquiring sizable quantities of firearms beyond the Kei. Significantly, late in the month Ngqika warriors seized some confiscated cattle from the colonial Xhosa police. This involved the first instance of active resistance. A few days later Maqoma and his subjects abandoned their kraals along the Tyume and joined Sandile in the mountains. Smith visited southern British Kaffraria and received further assurances of loyalty from the Ndlambe and Gqunukhwebe chiefs. In fact, Phato provided the colonial army with 1400 warriors.<sup>20</sup> As the governor organized an expedition to invade Sandile's Amatola sanctuary, he sent messages to the Ngqika chiefs inviting them to a conference near Fort Cox. Remembering his treacherous capture in 1847, the paramount sent Jongumsobomvu to confer with Smith. On the nineteenth of December, with a strong escort of 3000 warriors, Maqoma met Sir Harry who confirmed his intention to capture Sandile and strip him of all rank. When the Jingqi ruler raised the matter of his unjust expulsion from the Kat River in 1829, the governor became enraged and screamed that while Maqoma may once have been a great leader, he "was now a drunken beast!" Subsequently, Jongumsobomvu asked why colonial soldiers were surrounding the Amatolas? Responding, Smith reminded Maqoma that "you know all about ships - you have been at Algoa Bay and know I can bring them there." After the Jingqi chief acknowledged this, the governor threatened that "in four days I can have my ships at the Buffalo with thousands of soldiers to punish all bad men who stir up the country to strife and war." Astutely,

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<sup>19</sup>Brownlee, Reminiscences, pp. 169-170.

<sup>20</sup>For firearms and Maqoma's move to the bush see (CA) GH 14/49, MacKinnon to Smith, 20 November and 2 December 1850. For the collaboration of the Ndlambe and Gqunukhwebe see Milton, The Edges of War, p. 181.

Jongumsobomvu asked Smith if he had "any ships that can sail into the Amatolas?" <sup>21</sup> Frustrated by Maqoma's intellect and wit, the governor returned immediately to Fort Cox.

On the morning of Christmas Eve Colonel MacKinnon led 600 soldiers from Fort Cox into the Amatolas under instructions from Smith to capture Sandile. As the British troops moved east through the narrow Booma Pass, hundreds of Ngqika sharpshooters fired down on them from the rocky precipices. Bullets fell like hail. Soldiers fell. Others scattered. Confusion reigned. After sustaining heavy casualties, the surprised expedition ran the gauntlet of the ambush and MacKinnon decided that it was too dangerous to return to Fort Cox via the deadly pass. Harassed continually by their Xhosa pursuers, the soldiers headed south out of the mountains toward the Burnshill mission and Fort White. While a colonial officer sighted Sandile among the warriors, Jingqi oral tradition claims that Maqoma orchestrated the ambush.<sup>22</sup> Jongumsobomvu's development of similar tactics throughout the 1820's and 30's, coupled with Sandile's inexperience, suggests that the Jingqi chief must have planned, organised and led this operation.

The Ngqika counter-attacked. On Christmas morning Sandile's and Maqoma's warriors, many armed with muskets, swept down from the Amatolas and destroyed the nearby settler villages of Woburn, Auckland, and Juanasberg. Stolen Jingqi land on the west side of the Tyume was recaptured. Abandoned by MacKinnon's column, Governor Smith was besieged at Fort Cox with only a handful of cavalrymen to protect him. Throughout the last week of 1850, whites around the Ngqika area were confined to the

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<sup>21</sup>Eastern Province Herald, 4 January 1851.

<sup>22</sup>Bisset, Sport and War, pp. 128-159; Brownlee, Reminiscences, pp. 302-303; Eastern Province Herald, 1 May 1852; and interview with Chief Lent Maqoma.

forts and the British military was clearly in a state of complete confusion and paralysis while Sandile and Maqoma had seized the initiative.<sup>23</sup> Rebellion had begun.

Further developments shocked Sir Harry Smith. After Maqoma's expulsion from the upper Kat River in 1829 a community of pro-colonial Khoi farmers had been established in his place. While the Kat River Settlement had always been loyal to the colony and supported its many wars of expansion against the Xhosa, by the late 1840's the situation had changed dramatically. Under Smith's administration whites and Fingoes had been allowed to encroach on Khoi land. Frustration in the settlement reached a climax with the introduction of an exorbitant quit-rent and the eviction of Khoi and mixed-race squatters. Hearing news of the Ngqika rebellion in late December 1850, Hermanus Matroos led the Kat River Khoi in successful attacks against the local Fingoes which encouraged more frustrated Khoi and coloured farmers to join him.<sup>24</sup> In a recent historical study, Clifton Crais has convincingly described the Kat River rebellion as part of a broader resistance by Khoi and mixed-race people against the development of a coercive, racial capitalism in which they were becoming a landless working class. Within a few weeks many Khoi Cape Mounted Riflemen would desert their British officers for similar reasons.<sup>25</sup>

Matroos, whose real name was Xoggomesh, was the son of a Khoi mother and Gqunukhwebe father and had been employed by Ngqika during his conference with Governor Charles Somerset in 1819. Subsequently, he fell

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<sup>23</sup>The South African Commercial Advertiser, 19 December 1857; and Berning, Conversations of Sir George Cory, pp. 87-88.

<sup>24</sup>For a comprehensive study of the Kat River rebellion see Kirk, "Progress and Decline".

<sup>25</sup>Crais, White Supremacy and Black Resistance, pp. 175-188.

out of favour with the paramount and joined Maqoma's chiefdom on the upper Kat. However, during the expulsion of the Jingqi from that area in 1829 Xoggomesh supposedly informed Colonel Somerset that Jongumsobomvu intended to resist and deserted to the colonial camp. Throughout the 1830's and 40's, he lived in the Kat River Settlement and gathered a small, mixed group of displaced Khoi and Xhosa followers. Dissatisfied with his European masters, the fifty six year old Hermanus, sometime in December 1850, renewed his relationship with Maqoma who was himself preparing for rebellion. Forgetting their past differences, the two leaders planned a combined raid on Fort Beaufort which at the time was more of a large military camp than a fortified position. Strategically, this post could be used by the British as a staging area for operations against both the Amatolas and the Kat River Settlement. It also contained a substantial quantity of firearms and ammunition which if seized, could facilitate the revolt. In the early morning darkness of the sixth of January 1851, Hermanus and Maqoma led nearly 2000 Khoi and Ngqika fighters to within a kilometre of Fort Beaufort. Unfortunately, Hermanus was overly anxious and initiated the raid at four o'clock, two hours before the time which had been agreed upon. Watching from a distance, Jongumsobomvu was surprised to see hundreds of muzzle-flashes break the darkness and hear the sounds of the Khoi rushing toward the post. The British had been better prepared than expected and Hermanus's division was repelled before Maqoma could react. The raid was a failure. As the Khoi retreated into the bush, the Jingqi chief learned that Hermanus had been shot dead during the attack. With the increasing morning light threatening to reveal his position, Jongumsobomvu withdrew his men to the Amatolas. When the Kat River Khoi ignored desperate British offers of clemency, the settler press claimed that, "the rebels, backed by the Kaffir chief Macomo, in whom they relied for the fullest assistance if pressed upon by the colonial forces,

chose to maintain their attitude of opposition to the government."<sup>26</sup>

In 1847 the over-confident Governor Smith had arbitrarily annexed the Thembu country around the Moravian mission of Shiloh. Although Maphasa's chiefdom had always been an ally of the colony, the introduction of white settlers and the construction of the town of Whittlesea, named after Sir Harry's birthplace, caused considerable resentment. By the last week of January this chief, having heard about the Ngqika and Kat River disturbances, rebelled against the government. Significantly, the presence of Khoi riflemen and Xhosa warriors within the Thembu army which attacked Whittlesea indicated a degree of communication and cooperation between all the rebel groups. After colonial firepower and reinforcements had repelled Maphasa's army twelve times, the corpse of one of Maqoma's minor sons was found among the slain.<sup>27</sup> As with Hermanus, Jongumsobomvu had put aside his long rivalry with the Thembu to foster a widespread, multi-ethnic rebellion.

Donning the uniform of an ordinary Cape Mounted Rifleman, Smith and his cavalry escort, on the last day of December 1850, escaped the siege of Fort Cox. With his headquarters established at King William's Town, the governor planned his response to the shockingly simultaneous rebellions. Phato's collaboration ensured that the British could land hundreds of reinforcements unhindered from Cape Town on the Kaffrarian coast. As relief columns were dispatched to forts Beaufort, Cox, Hare and White, the warriors of Sandile's and Maqoma's Ngqika and Bhotomane's and Tola's Dange harassed the colonial soldiers and withdrew into their mountain stronghold. Siyolo, the son of the great warrior Mdushane and the only Ndlambe chief to rebel, led his people into the dense Fish River bush

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<sup>26</sup>Godlonton and Irving, Narrative of the Kaffir War, pp. 141-148 and 292.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 154.



where they blocked the road from the colony. By the end of February Henry Somerset, who Smith had promoted to major general and given command of all the frontier forces, had laid waste to the Kat River Settlement and scattered the Khoi rebels now under Willem Uithaalder, a disgruntled veteran of the Cape Mounted Rifles.<sup>28</sup> It appeared as if the Europeans had regained the initiative.

From the opening days of the conflict Maqoma's principal sons took opposite paths. Namba, the twenty-four year old Great son and heir of the Jingqi chieftaincy, opposed his father and refused to participate in the fighting. Although the young prince had been hostile to missionaries in the past, in late December 1850 he escorted the Reverend Kayser and twenty-four Xhosa converts from Knapp's Hope to the safety of Laing's Lovedale mission near Fort Hare. Conversely, Kona, the thirty-four year old Right-Hand son who had fought in the previous two wars and ruled his own section of the Jingqi, supported Jongumsobomvu and in early 1851 led ambushes against colonial relief columns. This contradiction was undoubtedly precipitated by Maqoma's unsuccessful attempt in July 1850 to have Sandile declare Kona as the legitimate Jingqi heir.<sup>29</sup>

With the Kat River Settlement destroyed, Maqoma and Kona led their warriors back into the territory from which they had been expelled in 1829. Throughout April and May 1851 the Jingqi burned white farms along the upper Kat and seized immense herds from the Fingoes. The Balfour mission, near the site of Jongumsobomvu's first Great Place, was captured. Additionally, Maqoma was joined by some of Uithaalder's scattered rebels and Khoi deserters from the Cape Mounted Rifles who all possessed firearms

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<sup>28</sup>Harington, Sir Harry Smith, chap. IX.

<sup>29</sup>For Namba see (CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 26 December 1850 and Hummel, Kayser Journal, p. 184. For Kona see Godlonton and Irving, Narrative, p. 239. For Maqoma's attempt to have Kona declared his heir see (CA) BK 432, Brownlee to MacKinnon, 30 August 1850.

and the marksmanship skills acquired during colonial service. The Khoi heritage of the Jingqi chief's mother probably contributed to his popularity among these insurgents. However, since the Kat River Valley was a generally open area, Somerset's mounted patrols threatened to dislodge Maqoma and his followers from their reconquered homeland.<sup>30</sup>

Immediately west of the upper Kat lay the heavily forested mountains and ravines of Mtontsi. Known as the Waterkloof to the settlers, this area had been Maqoma's favourite boyhood haunt but was now part of the Cape Colony. While only fifty square miles in size, Mtontsi was composed of some of the roughest and most impassable terrain in southern Africa. Cutting a horseshoe shaped pattern through the high Kroome plateau, the Waterkloof was a narrow river valley with steep, rocky sides. Within this ravine a canopy created by huge trees blocked out the sunlight and under it a tangled mass of creepers and thorn bushes made movement nearly impossible. This would render colonial horses and artillery useless. Jongumsobomvu knew all the secret trails and caves which could be used to elude an adversary and hide small numbers of cattle as a reliable food supply. Notably, from the open summit of the Kroome Heights the entire Kat River area, including Fort Beaufort, was visible.<sup>31</sup> Mtontsi was an ideal military stronghold.

Around August 1851 Maqoma moved his Jingqi and Khoi fighters up into the Waterkloof area. From this sanctuary he proceeded to raid white farms throughout the districts of Somerset and Craddock. This was an extremely astute strategic manoeuvre. The presence of rebels within the colony itself distracted Smith and his officers from the main Ngqika population and food reserves in the Amatolas. Additionally, with the Kat

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<sup>30</sup>(CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 20 April to 16 May 1851.

<sup>31</sup>For a descriptions of the Waterkloof see Peires, The Dead Will Arise, pp 14-15; and Mostert, Frontiers pp. 1113-1114.

River Settlement destroyed, fresh Xhosa warriors could move covertly between Mtontsi and the Amatolas. A British sergeant estimated that Jongumsobomvu maintained no more than 200 fighters in the Waterkloof but constantly rotated them with more rested and well fed fighters from the east.<sup>32</sup>

Somerset led an ineffectual expedition up into the Kroome Heights which failed to locate Magoma's force and hurriedly withdrew. On the seventh of September 613 infantrymen of the 74th Highlanders, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Fordyce, ascended the Kroome plateau with the intention of spending the night on the grassy summit and clearing the dense Waterkloof in the morning. Magoma's observers had spotted the expedition soon after it had left Fort Beaufort. Marching up a narrow forest trail, the exhausted highlanders, wearing heavy uniforms and cumbersome packs in the intense noon heat, reached the open heights and established a camp. However, in a short time Xhosa warriors appeared at the edge of the forest and several minor skirmishes resulted. Suddenly, the soldiers heard a loud gong reverberating from deep within the trees and Magoma, riding a grey-white horse, charged out of the forest and ordered his men to cut off the column by seizing the trail which it had used to ascend the Kroome Heights. While the chief's horse was quickly shot from under him, another was brought which he "bravely mounted" and continued directing his men. Fearing that he would be trapped on the plateau, Fordyce ordered a few cavalrymen to head off the Xhosa thrust. They were successful and Jongumsobomvu's fighters withdrew temporarily.

With most of his ammunition expended, the highland colonel knew that his soldiers could not repel another attack and as dusk approached he led the patrol down the narrow trail. Anticipating this move, Magoma had positioned his men in the thick bush along the sides of the path. The

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<sup>32</sup>McKay, Reminiscences of the Last Kaffir War, pp. 178-179.

chief had also ordered trees to be felled across the trail as obstacles. Former members of the Cape Mounted Rifles informed Jongumsobomvu that the British bugle calls which they were hearing indicated a withdrawal. As the long train of highlanders fumbled clumsily down the confined path, Jingqi warriors reached out and dragged many of them into the bush where they were stabbed to death. Positioned in high tree branches, Khoi sharpshooters picked off unsuspecting officers. In such a constricted area muskets and bayonets were useless and the soldiers quickly panicked and began running down the trail only to be held up by fallen trees where they were swarmed by more of Magoma's ambushers. In the subsequent hand-to-hand combat, the unencumbered Xhosa were more than a match for the equipment laden, fatigued highlanders. When Fordyce and his men finally reached the edge of the forest at the bottom of the Kroome Heights the rebels broke off their attack having killed thirteen soldiers and wounded another fourteen.<sup>33</sup> The British were stunned. Perfecting the ambush tactics which he had developed decades before, Jongumsobomvu had won the initial battle of what would become known as the Waterkloof Campaign.

According to highland Sergeant James McKay, several months later a Xhosa woman described the fate of Bandmaster Hartong who had been captured during the ambush. On the day after the battle, the prisoner was brought to Magoma's camp in the Waterkloof. Although the chief was disposed to treat Hartong with mercy, the relatives of those who had died in the fight demanded revenge. Consequently, Jongumsobomvu handed the prisoner over to this group who proceeded to pin him to the ground by driving stakes through his wrists and fed him strips of his own flesh. Surviving several days of torture, Hartong finally expired.<sup>34</sup> While McKay's memoir employed this incident as an example of Xhosa barbarity, the vicious Waterkloof

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<sup>33</sup>These two paragraphs are based on MacKay, Reminiscences of the Last Kaffir War, pp. 90-105.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 106-107.

campaign would result in the dehumanization of all combatants and outrageous atrocities were committed by both sides.

On the twelfth of October, Somerset renewed operations against Maqoma. Dividing his forces into two divisions, the frustrated major-general and Lieutenant Colonel John Michel led roughly 500 British infantrymen with a few Fingoes and Cape Mounted Riflemen around the Kroome Heights and ascended it from the north. Simultaneously, Fordyce and his 600 highlanders departed Fort Beaufort under cover of darkness and by the next morning were once again marching up that fateful trail to the same open place where they had first encountered Jongumsobomvu. On the grassy plateau the two divisions rendezvoused and began sweeping the forest valley. However, after some heavy skirmishing Maqoma's fighters had driven the colonials out of Mtontsi. Somerset was infuriated and spent the next four weeks plodding about the thick Waterkloof forests in search of his elusive enemy. By the beginning of November the soldiers' were drained both mentally and physically. Their uniforms were in tatters and many suffered from dysentery and fever. Desperate to dislodge the rebels, Somerset, on the sixth of November, launched a massive sweep of the Waterkloof and Fuller's Hoek valleys. Covering the troops who were clearing the forested low ground, Fordyce and his men were positioned on an open summit known as Mount Misery. In the bright morning light the highlanders saw black silhouettes at the edge of the dark forest which surrounded them. Firing began. While directing a company to take up a new position, Fordyce was hit in the chest by a musket ball and died. As the highlanders dragged his body from the field, Jongumsobomvu's insurgents mocked the soldiers by shouting, "Johnny, bring stretcher! Johnny, bring stretcher!" During an unsuccessful counter-attack, the white soldiers suffered many more fatalities. Two days later Somerset withdrew all colonial forces from the Kroome/Waterkloof area and claimed a military victory. However, the settler press observed correctly that

"Maqoma remains proud master of the field. He has outgeneralled the first Division. He has cut down its men and for the remainder he must entertain something very nearly approaching supreme contempt."<sup>35</sup> Once again, Jongumsobomvu had defeated the British.

The initial Mtontsi campaign was the greatest Xhosa military success over Europeans and has been commemorated in contemporary oral tradition. For over 140 years Maqoma has been praised as "the leopard of Fordyce". Xhosa stories concerning these battles relate in epic sweep how the "invincible" British were drawn into the dense forests where they were skilfully outmanoeuvred, cleverly ambushed and brutally killed. According to a modern Rharhabe chief, "Maqoma was a hero and a master of tactics in war. Even though we had no guns and cannon he was able to defeat trained and skilled British soldiers." After a short pause the elderly informant continued:

Maqoma took his men and positioned them in a dense forest. He left one man in the entrance of the forest. This man was responsible for indicating to the others that all the British troops had entered the forest by blowing a horn. When the British army came Maqoma killed them like flies. Maqoma confused them although he was not educated.<sup>36</sup>

Interestingly, this corresponds exactly with documentary evidence such as memoirs of white soldiers who fought in the campaign. However, one tradition of Fordyce's death contains obvious symbolism and imagery. It is said that Jongumsobomvu rode Jingqi, his favourite bull, into battle against the British where he personally shot the highland commander. While this was unlikely and most European written accounts claim that Fordyce was killed by a Khoi sniper, the presence of Jingqi indicated the

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<sup>35</sup>For the rebel shouts see United Services Magazine, 1852, I, p. 592. For the settler press see Eastern Province News, 22 November 1851. McKay, Reminiscences of the Last Kaffir War provides a vivid, eye-witness account of Fordyce's death.

<sup>36</sup>Interview with Chief K.B.K. Ntsele, New Brighton Township, 19 October 1991.

particularly significant role which Maqoma and his followers played in "the War of Mlanjeni". Jongumsobomvu's bull was the symbol of his chiefdom. Later generations have recorded this as fact. The claim that Maqoma actually killed Fordyce might have been added to the story to demonstrate the chief's martial ability and illustrate his personal and seminal contribution to these victories.<sup>37</sup>

Foiled in the Waterkloof by Maqoma, Governor Smith needed an easy victory to bolster support in both the colony and Britain. Repeating his actions from 1835, Sir Harry ordered the invasion of the independent territory of the Gcaleka, the mother chiefdom of all the Xhosa whose ruler was their nominal paramount. In early December 1851 Major General Somerset led 5000 soldiers and settlers across the Kei and returned six weeks later with 30,000 captured cattle from Sarhili's neutral chiefdom. This not only provided Smith with a military victory which he could report to the Colonial Office, it also supplied his beleaguered army and reassured the colonists that they would benefit from the war. Furthermore, the Xhosa were dealt a massive psychological blow instantly counteracting the national pride which had been inflated by the victory in the Waterkloof. Subsequently, in late January 1852 British columns entered the Amatolas and burned Ngqika crops and huts. As hunger now threatened his community, Sandile sued for peace and Charles Brownlee informed the paramount that Smith required his people to move east of the Kei. This was completely unacceptable and the Ngqika paramount refused to surrender. However, on the first of March the governor, who was preparing to renew operations in the Waterkloof, received notification from London which blamed him for the continuation of this increasingly expensive

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<sup>37</sup>For traditions of the Mtontsi campaign see interviews with Chief Wati Maqoma, Near Balfour, 17 October 1991; Mrs. Tanzana Mali, Ntselamanzi Location, Alice District, 16 October 1991; Mr. J. Mncono, New Brighton Township, Port Elizabeth, 19 October 1991; Mr. Whiskers Tukushe, Gqungqe Location, Kentani District, 24 October 1991; Mrs. Sesiwe Cecilia Maqoma, Port Alfred Township, 18 October 1991; Chief Lent Maqoma; Mr. Gqirhana and Mr. Ngqabavu. For Maqoma's praises see Rubusana, *Zemk'inkomo*, p. 257.

conflict and dismissed him from office. The horrible Waterkloof campaign and the death of Fordyce were cited as major reasons for this decision. Referring to the tense meeting outside Fort Cox just prior to the conflict, Jeffrey Peires claims correctly that, "the 'drunken beast' Maqoma had inflicted a terrible revenge on the 'hero of Aliwal'".<sup>38</sup> Symbolically and ironically, Jongumsobomvu's foot rested on the throat of Sir Harry who had been "a dog and so behaved like a dog." The public humiliation in Port Elizabeth had been avenged.

The humbled governor penetrated Maqoma's den. Determined to redeem his reputation during the last weeks of his tenure, Smith concentrated all his forces against Maqoma's Waterkloof stronghold. Placing posts to the north-east to prevent any escape to the Amatolas, on the tenth of March the governor directed three strong, converging columns to ascend the Kroome Heights from the east, south and west. Six artillery pieces and many rockets were dragged to the open summit from where they bombarded the dense, tangled forests of the Waterkloof and Fuller's Hoek. Advancing from the west, the column commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William Eyre assaulted the latter ravine, known to the colonials as Maqoma's Den. Led personally by their energetic colonel, the British soldiers and Fingo levies discovered the corpses of many warriors who had been killed by the bombardment and destroyed a few hidden camps and corn fields. Eyre found 130 women hiding in a cave and took them prisoner. These included Jongumsobomvu's Great Wife, Noxlana, and also his youngest spouse. Encountering stiff resistance from the rebels, to the west Lieutenant Colonel Edward Napier's column moved slowly up the Waterkloof valley. To divide Maqoma's followers, Lieutenant Colonel Michel's force ascended the plateau which separated the Waterkloof and Fuller's Hoek but met with only

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<sup>38</sup>For the Gcaleka and Amatola operations see Milton, The Edges of War, pp. 213-214. For Smith's dismissal see PP, C. 1428 of 1852, Papers re. State of the Kaffir Tribes, Earl Grey to Smith, 14 January 1852, p. 254; and Harington, Sir Harry Smith, pp. 204-218. For Peires see The Dead Will Arise, p. 15.



minor skirmishing. Continuing for a week, this massive operation damaged and disrupted Maqoma's forces but failed ultimately to expel the die-hard insurgents. After writing to London that "the war would remain unextinguished until that determined chief (Maqoma) should be... thoroughly dislodged" from the Kroome area, Smith's last official act, in late March, was to lead his army into the Amatolas where they burned crops and captured cattle. However, realizing that another governor would arrive soon, the Ngqika chiefs still refused to capitulate. Maqoma's captured wives were held at Fort Hare and forced to send two female messengers to the chief asking him to surrender. When the women returned they stated that Jongumsobomvu had refused to come to the fort and was waiting to see what "the great men will do".<sup>39</sup> Maqoma waited in his den.

By the middle of April, Smith had left the Cape Colony and been replaced by Sir George Cathcart who temporarily suspended operations in the eastern districts so he could assess the situation and allow the exhausted colonial army to rest. After thirty-four years of service in South Africa, Somerset, who had been accused of incompetence and war profiteering, was transferred to India. Cathcart formulated an effective strategy. Throughout June the colonial forces drove Siyolo's warriors out of the Fish River bush and secured the wagon road from Grahamstown to King William's Town. In turn, the new governor established a series of small posts throughout this area from where mounted policemen could constantly patrol to ensure that the Xhosa did not return.<sup>40</sup>

In early July Cathcart invaded Mtontsi. Once again, Englishmen and

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<sup>39</sup>For the operations see PP, C.1635 of 1853, Further Correspondence Relative to the Kafir Tribes and to the Recent Outbreak on the Eastern Frontier, Smith to Earl Grey, 17 March 1852 and 7 April 1852, pp. 62-74. For the female messengers see (CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 27 March 1852.

<sup>40</sup>Milton, The Edges of War, p. 217.

Fingoes scoured the Waterkloof and Fuller's Hoek ravines in search of Maqoma's insurgents. Of particular note was the participation of a volunteer corps which had been raised by the British mercenary Stephen Lakeman. This unit consisted primarily of several hundred white convicts from Cape Town who were armed with the new, and extremely accurate, minie rifle. Typical of Lakeman's men was one who carried "a broken reaping hook, to cut the throats of the women and children we had taken prisoners."<sup>41</sup> Concealing his remaining followers in the thickest parts of the forest, Jongumsobomvu constantly harassed the colonial forces with snipers and small ambushes. After several weeks of pursuing the Jingqi and Khoi rebels, Cathcart established a small fort on the site of Fordyce's death and withdrew his army to Fort Beaufort. Positioned on the high, open plain between the Waterkloof and Maqoma's Den, Fort Fordyce dominated these ravines, reduced the insurgents freedom of movement, and denied them their favourite observation post. More importantly, the British garrison left at this fort continued to patrol the wooded valleys hunting Jongumsobomvu's people.<sup>42</sup> Maqoma's den had been penetrated.

Throughout August Cathcart invaded Sarhili's territory east of the Kei, burnt the chief's Great Place and brought back 10,000 head of cattle. Despite this second unprovoked attack by the Europeans, the Gcaleka paramount remained neutral and offered no resistance. Using this vast herd as a food supply for his army, the governor could renew operations against the rebels in British Kaffraria.<sup>43</sup>

Cathcart returned to Maqoma's stronghold. By the middl of

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<sup>41</sup>Stephen Lakeman, What I Saw In Kaffir-Land, (London, 1880), pp. 19 and 94.

<sup>42</sup>PP. C.1635 of 1853, Cathcart to Sir J.S. Patington, 20 July 1852, pp. 149-154.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., Cathcart to Pakington, 15 August 1852 pp. 163-167.

September the governor had assembled 3000 British soldiers, Khoi mounted riflemen, and Fingo levies around Fort Beaufort. Beginning on the morning of the fifteenth, colonial columns ascended the Kroome Heights from both south and north and scoured the forests of the Waterkloof and Fuller's Hoek. Although a few Thembu warriors under Chief Quesha, Jongumsobomvu's brother-in-law, had arrived in the Waterkloof to assist the rebels, they were not enough to stem the tide. As the insurgents could not elude such an overwhelming number of Europeans and Fingoes, Maqoma began evacuating his few remaining followers to the Amatolas. The insurgents were routed. From a high position, Colonel Eyre observed a group of 400 Xhosa fleeing the area and dispatched his cavalry to intercept them. However, the insurgents escaped by dispersing into the thick bush. Hanging any man they encountered, after two days Eyre boasted that his soldiers had killed thirty-six rebels and captured 168 women and children. In order to prevent Jongumsobomvu from slipping back into the Kroome kloofs, three more small forts were constructed at key locations. By the middle of October, Cathcart proudly reported "that the Kroome district is now entirely abandoned and deserted by the enemy."<sup>44</sup>

Official colonial correspondence underestimated Xhosa fatalities and failed to portray the horrific character of the final British operation in the Kroomes. While Colonel Eyre had responded to Maqoma's guerrilla campaign by becoming a skilled bush fighter, by late September he had been so dehumanized by war that he employed tactics designed to terrorize the rebels and their non-combatant families. As Jongumsobomvu's people were fleeing the Waterkloof area, British commanders promoted atrocities. Dead insurgents were suspended from trees as a reminder to

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., Cathcart to Pakington, 20 September and 12 October 1852, pp. 167-175. Cape Frontier Times 21 September and 26 October 1852.

the others. Women and children were shot.<sup>45</sup> Lakeman witnessed a ghastly, but typical, episode:

Doctor A --- of the 60th had asked my men to procure him a few native skulls of both sexes. This was a task easily accomplished. One morning they brought back to camp about two dozen heads of various ages. As these were not supposed to be in a presentable state for the doctor's acceptance, the next night they turned my vat into a caldron for the removal of the superfluous flesh. And there these men sat, gravely smoking their pipes during the live-long night, and stirring round and round the heads in that seething boiler, as though they were cooking black-apple dumplings.<sup>46</sup>

Another British soldier, whose sympathy had been eroded by the conflict, wrote to his mother that:

As we ascended the evidence of the fight became more frequent; rolling skulls, dislodged by those in front, came bounding down between our legs; the bones lay thick among the loose stones in the sluits and gulleys, and the bush on either side showed many a bleaching skeleton. A fine specimen of a Xhosa head, I took the liberty of putting into my saddle-bag, and afterwards brought it home with me to Scotland.<sup>47</sup>

How could a total of 36 dead rebels produce so many skulls and bones? Eyre must have slaughtered many more fleeing Xhosa and Khoi than he dared admit. Correctly, Peires states that "the final assault on the Waterkloof was less like a battle than a triumphal procession through a charnel house or even, perhaps, a Calvary."<sup>48</sup>

Immediately after Maqoma had returned to the Amatolas, the British invaded this last Ngqika stronghold. Throughout October and November crops and kraals were burned and hundreds of Xhosa driven east of the

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<sup>45</sup>Mellish of Hodsock Papers, University of Nottingham, Diary of Private E.G. Richards, 3 November 1852.

<sup>46</sup>Lakeman, What I Saw in Kaffirland, pp. 94-95.

<sup>47</sup>Greenjackets Regimental Museum, Winchester, no date, J. Fisher to mother.

<sup>48</sup>Peires, The Dead Will Arise, p. 26.

mountains to the banks of the Kei River. Camped on the Tyume, Eyre thought that "Macomo and many of the fugitives from the Waterkloof are lurking among these fastnesses."<sup>49</sup> By November Uithaalder had gone into exile well beyond the Kei and many Khoi rebels began to surrender. Siyolo, the Ndlambe chief who had dominated the Fish River bush, turned himself in and was instantly shipped off to distant Robben Island. Understanding that they could not continue to resist, Sandile and Maqoma sent John Maclean, commissioner to the southern chiefdoms, a message requesting pardon for all chiefs if they capitulated and surrendered Uithaalder and Mlanjeni.<sup>50</sup>

Although Cathcart had initially been intent upon expelling the Ngqika east of the Kei, another development softened his resolve. After the last Waterkloof operation, the governor marched north with 2,500 men to extort 10,000 cattle from Moshweshwe, King of Lesotho. In December 1852 the Sotho ruler refused to comply with this demand and defeated the colonial army at the battle of Berea. Fearing retaliation by a more powerful colonial army, Moshweshwe congratulated Cathcart on his "victory" sending a large herd of cattle. Aware of what happened to governors who lost battles, Cathcart accepted the ruse and returned to British Kaffraria determined to end the conflict there as quickly and inexpensively as possible.<sup>51</sup>

As colonial soldiers swept through the Amatolas and the Ngqika

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<sup>49</sup>PP, C.1635 of 1853, Eyre to Cathcart, 7 October 1852, p. 177.

<sup>50</sup>For Uithaalder and Siyolo Grahamstown Journal, 13 November 1852. For the message from Sandile and Maqoma see Correspondence of Sir George Cathcart (London, 1856), Cathcart to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 14 November 1852, p. 145.

<sup>51</sup>H. Pearse, "The Kaffir and Basuto Campaigns of 1852 and 1853", United Services Magazine, 1898; L. Thompson, Survival in Two Worlds: Moshoeshoe of Lesotho, 1786-1870 (Oxford, 1975); and P. Sanders, Moshoeshoe (Cape Town, 1975).

began to starve, Maqoma kept on fighting. With sneaking admiration, Cathcart described his tenacity and tactical skill:

Old Macoma (sic), with 40 followers, is in the forests of the Amatolas... he is as slippery as an eel. If one path be left open, he gets out and ensconces himself in another corner of the forest.<sup>52</sup>

Although Sandile and most of the Ngqika had fled east of the Kei by January 1853, Jongumsobomvu and a handful of Jingqi warriors continued to defy the British by remaining in the "intricate recesses and forests" of the Amatolas. However, at the same time Maqoma sent envoys to the British forces at both Fort Hare and Fort Beaufort to investigate possible terms of surrender. He discovered that if the Ngqika crossed into Gcaleka territory as a sign of submission all the chiefs would be pardoned and land west of Kei restored to them. Unofficially, local British commanders arranged a truce with Jongumsobomvu to give him the opportunity to comply with colonial demands. Since the situation appeared utterly hopeless, in the middle of February Maqoma joined Sandile in the Transkei from where they sent another message to John Maclean seeking peace with the British. All the Ngqika chiefs fully expected to be allowed to return to the Amatolas once they had surrendered. Deciding to avoid further fighting by allowing Sandile's and Maqoma's people back into British Kaffraria, Cathcart dispatched Charles Brownlee to present terms to the chiefs.<sup>53</sup> The rebellion was over.

During the fighting Mlanjeni fell into obscurity. Wisely, the Ngqika people relied on their battle-hardened chiefs to plan and coordinate military operations. While the traditional aristocracy had

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<sup>52</sup>Correspondence of Cathcart Cathcart to Earl Grey, 13 January 1853, p. 345.

<sup>53</sup>For Maqoma remaining in the Amatolas see Ibid., Cathcart to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 13 January 1853, p. 182. For Maqoma's envoys see (CL) MS 9043, James Laing Journal Vol. 3, 1 - 31 January 1853. For the message to Maclean see Milton, The Edges of War, pp. 220-221.

used the popularity of the prophet to mobilize their subjects for the revolt, Maqoma and his fellow chiefs regained legitimacy through resistance. The Mtontsi campaign would be remembered for generations as an heroic struggle against dispossession by the whites. Superseded by the chiefs which he had initially denounced in 1850, Mlanjeni became ignored by the Ngqika masses and died without any public concern in late August 1853.<sup>54</sup> Although Maqoma and Sandile ultimately surrendered to the British, they had been successful in preserving chiefly control over Ngqika society which had been the primary objective of their rebellion.

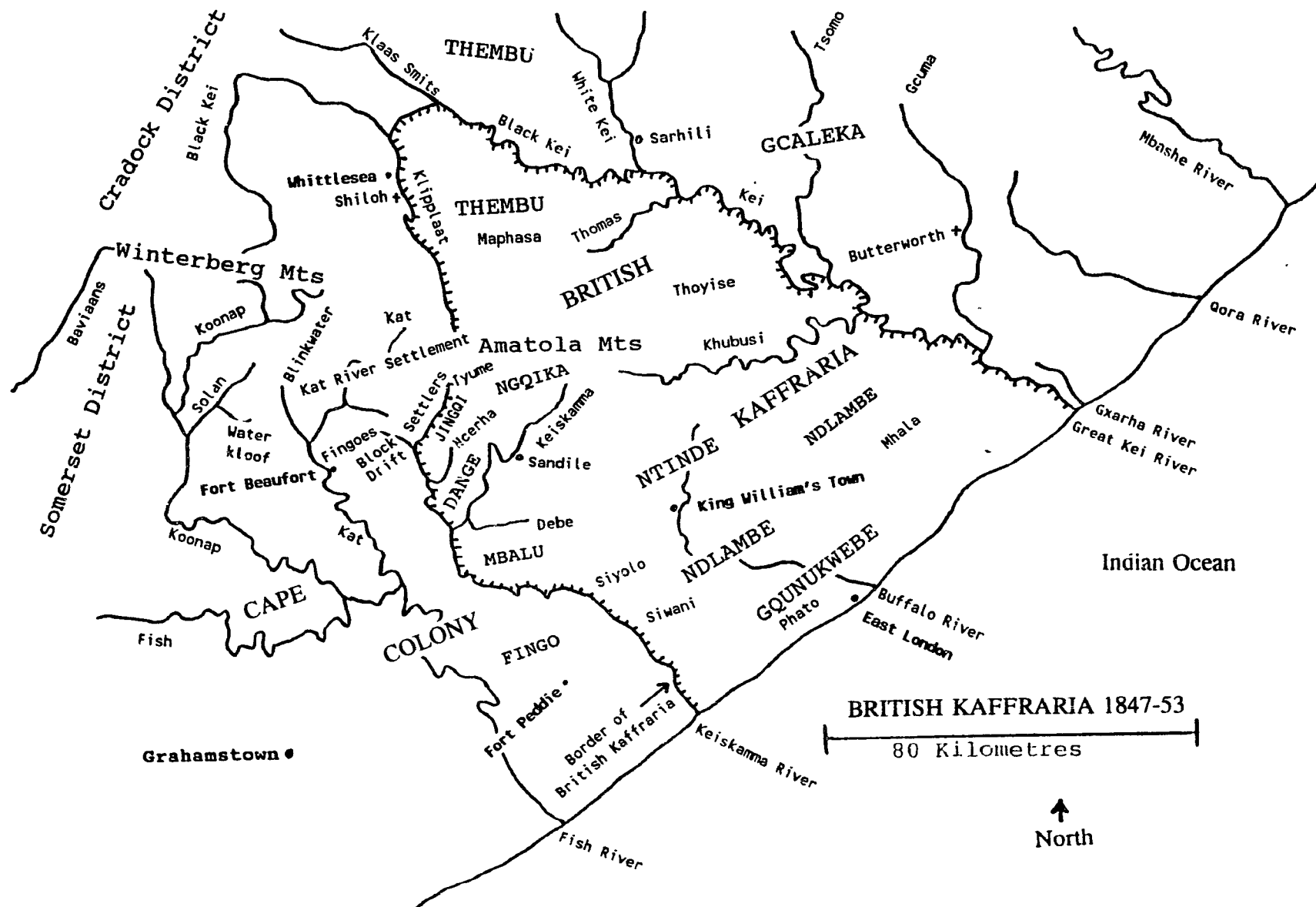
Maqoma's role in the "War of Mlanjeni" was his greatest military achievement. His strategic and tactical innovations enabled the Ngqika to sustain their longest and most concentrated conflict with the Europeans. Moving his subjects to Mtontsi was a direct threat to settler farms within the colony which distracted Governor Smith from the main Xhosa herds and crops in the Amatolas. In previous wars the Europeans had always defeated the Xhosa by destroying the productive capability of their society. Subsequent starvation repeatedly forced surrender. By delaying the British invasion of the Amatolas, Jongumsobomvu preserved the food supplies which fuelled the rebellion. Finally realizing the overwhelming and complete nature of the European conquest, the Jingqi chief put aside old disputes and rivalries with other African rulers and groups in order to foster a rebellion which transcended ethnic and political affiliation. Under Maqoma's command in the Waterkloof were not only Jingqi but also Khoi, coloureds and Thembu. Additionally, the chief suspended personal grudges against Sandile, Maphasa and Hermanus Matroos and worked closely with these leaders. Ambush tactics perfected by Maqoma before and during the conflict and clever use of terrain which was nearly impassable to heavily laden British soldiers enabled the rebels to seriously challenge

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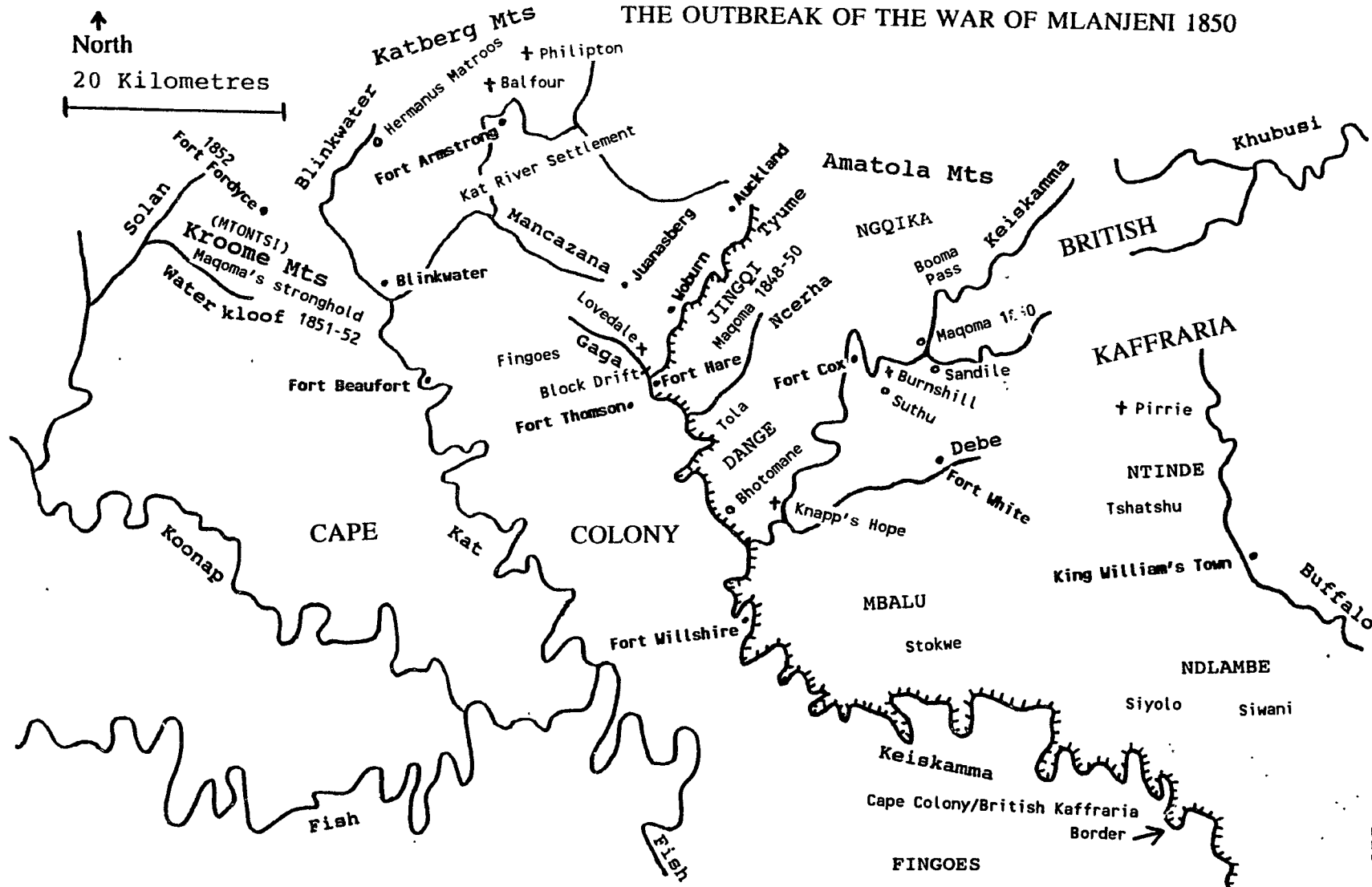
<sup>54</sup>Correspondence of Cathcart, Cathcart to Lieutenant-Governor Darling, 4 September 1853, p. 371.

technologically superior colonial forces. A dramatic increase in the use of firearms enhanced this effort. More than any other Xhosa chief, Maqoma successfully adapted traditional military methods in response to European firepower and total warfare. However, he could not alter the basic elements of Xhosa society which made it so vulnerable to colonial attack. It was only a matter of time before a more astute British governor ignored Jongumsobomvu's distraction and concentrated on raiding the Amatolas. With the Ngqika starving in their homeland, Maqoma's presence in the Waterkloof became tangential and the British themselves eventually invented methods of rooting out his elusive guerrillas.



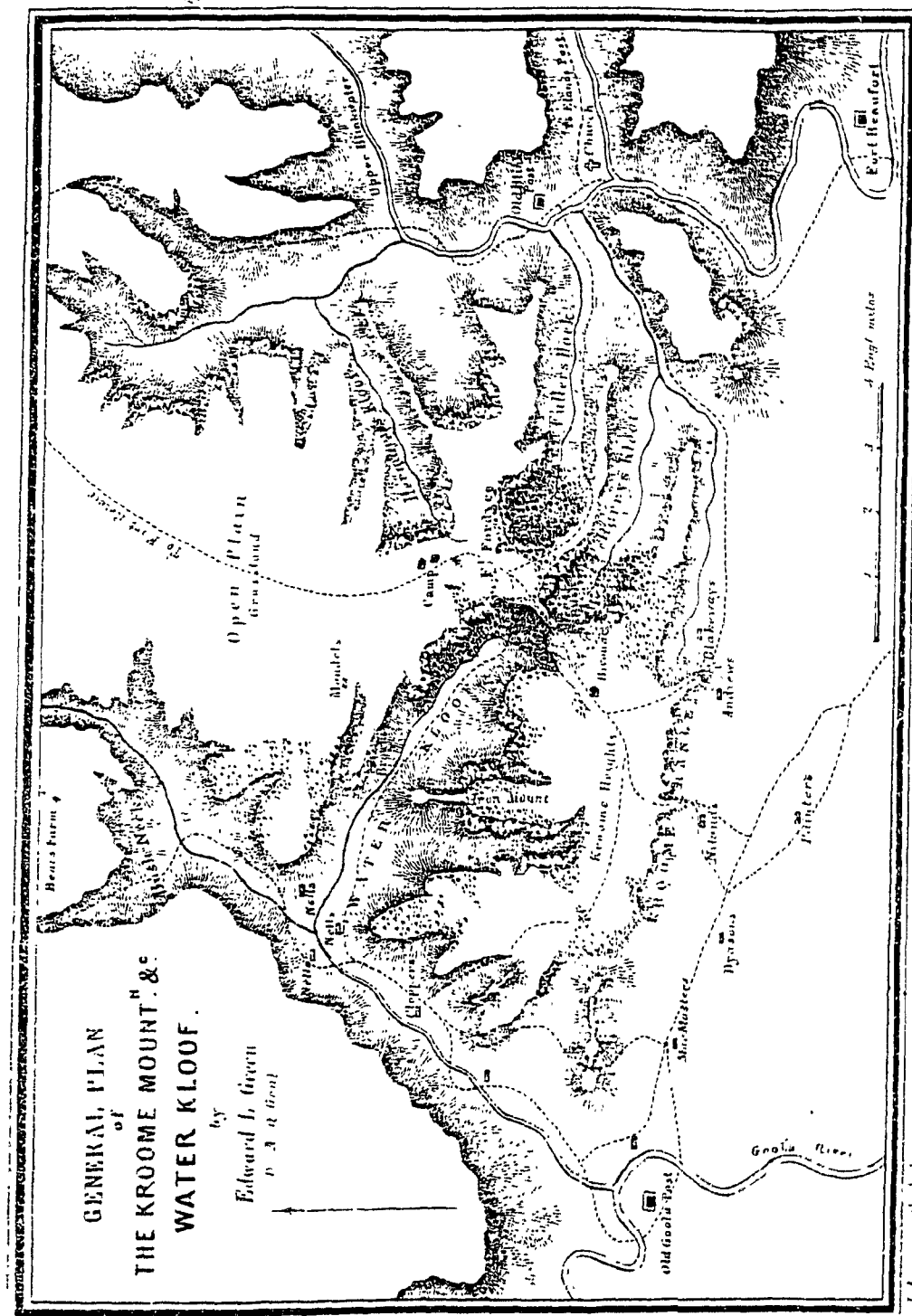


# THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR OF MLANJENI 1850



Military, N<sup>o</sup> 6 & 7.

In Gov. Cathcart's Despatch 20 July 1852.



J. Arrowsmith litho

## Chapter Six

### "Are You a Chief and Led by Black Men?"

#### Magoma's Role in the Xhosa Cattle-Killing (1853-57)

Between morning and afternoon interviews in nearby rural locations we often stopped in the town of Alice for some lunch. Sitting at a rough table in a small, working class diner called "CisKei Take-aways", Wonga and I ate our curry and rice. Although the presence of a white man among the entirely black clientele had initially caused some tension, six men dressed in dirty cover-alls eventually joined us and inquired curiously about our business. Within minutes we were engaged in an exciting discussion concerning the dispossession of their ancestors during the nineteenth century frontier wars. They knew little of Magoma except his reputation as a great fighter of this period. When I asked for their opinion about the the prophetess Nongqawuse and the Xhosa Cattle-Killing a sudden silence fell over the group and our new friends shook their heads in disappointment and sighed in unison. One middle-aged man broke the awkward silence claiming that "Nongqawuse was a British spy who was paid to destroy us". Another stated, "No, she was fooled by white men who hid behind some reeds and pretended to be long-dead chiefs. They convinced that silly girl to tell the people to slaughter all the cattle." Supporting this argument, yet another said that "George Grey found the black man's weakness - superstition - and used it against us. After surviving so many wars against the whites we never recovered from that disaster."

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The infamous Cattle-Killing of 1856-57 destroyed the last vestiges of independent Xhosa power. Since the late 1850's, descriptions of this event have been remarkably consistent. Reacting to the orders of a teenage prophetess, Nongqawuse, thousands of Xhosa slaughtered their herds

and refused to cultivate their land. While this sacrifice was supposed to stimulate a national rebirth, the ultimate result was mass starvation and complete dispossession by opportunistic colonial authorities. Although Xhosa tradition recognized the aristocrats as the owners of all the society's land and most of its cattle, many wealthy chiefs, including Maqoma and the national paramount Sarhili, participated vigorously in the movement. How can this be explained? Robert Godlonton, editor of the Grahamstown Journal, and the colonial government justified the seizure of Xhosa land and labour after the Cattle-Killing by reporting that the prophecies had been invented by the chiefs as a plot to force their starving people into a war with the Europeans.<sup>1</sup> Accused of being a drunken and erratic ruler, Maqoma was identified as a conspirator and imprisoned on Robben Island. Historians of the early twentieth century viewed the Cattle-Killing as the result of primitive superstition which deluded both rulers and subjects.<sup>2</sup> Although Maqoma was noted for his rational acceptance of western medical and military technology, he was characterized as one of those who was deceived by the "heathen" prophecies.<sup>3</sup> Writing in the 1950's, Nosipho Majeke claimed that European missionaries, through teaching biblical miracle stories, had been responsible for convincing the Xhosa that national suicide would stimulate

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<sup>1</sup>The myth of the chief's plot was first published in the Grahamstown Journal 9 January 1858. For an example of a supporting government document see (CA) CCP 1/2/1/5, G5 of 1858, Papers Indicating the Nature of the Plans Formed by the Kaffir Chiefs Which Led to the Late Destruction of their Cattle and Property. This is based almost exclusively on the coerced testimony of an eight year old girl, Nonkosi, said to have been one of the Cattle-Killing prophetesses.

<sup>2</sup>Examples include John H. Soga, The AmaXhosa: Life and Customs (Lovedale, 1931); and Eileen D'A Dowsley, "An Investigation of the Circumstances Relating to the Cattle-Killing Delusion in Kaffraria 1856-57", MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1932. Contrary to popular opinion, Dowsley, not Peires, was the first to identify a relationship between lung sickness and the Cattle-Killing.

<sup>3</sup>For Maqoma's consistent acceptance of western medicine see (CA) BK 100, Dr. J.P. Fitzgerald to J. Maclean, 11 December 1857; and Hummel, Kayser, p. 95. It is well known that during the 1850-53 war Maqoma's warriors employed both captured firearms and horses.

divine assistance.<sup>4</sup> This theory ignores the reality that most Xhosa, including Maqoma, could neither read a Bible nor had accepted its message. In the 1960's Monica Wilson, a pioneering liberal historian, described the Cattle-Killing as a "pagan reaction" to European-Christian invasion.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, this argument fails to articulate why certain non-Christian chiefs, such as Anta, who had suffered great territorial losses at white hands, opposed the slaughter and Wilson's brief analysis ignores Maqoma. The Cattle-Killing mystery deepened.

Jeffrey Peires, in the 1980's, brought much more depth of analysis into the study of the Cattle-Killing. In The Dead Will Arise he claims that the degree of popularity which the Nongqawuse movement enjoyed in any given chiefdom was related directly to how hard that community had been hit by the lungsickness epizootic of the previous year. According to Peires, the Xhosa chiefs whose herds had been devastated by the disease thought they might as well kill the survivors as they were going to die anyway. Penetration of the society by the Christian concept of resurrection produced Nongqawuse's millenarian vision. Class position did not determine reaction to the message. Some aristocrats followed the prophetess. Others dismissed her.<sup>6</sup> Peires describes the Cattle-Killing as:

a popular mass movement of a truly national character, uniting both chiefs and commoners, the major social classes of the pre-colonial social order, in a communal defence of their way of life.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Nosipho Majeke, The Role of Missionaries in Conquest (Cape Town, 1952), pp. 70-76.

<sup>5</sup>M. Wilson, "Cooperation and Conflict: the Eastern Cape Frontier" in Wilson and Thompson, (eds.), The Oxford History of South Africa Vol. I. For the same interpretation see J. Zarwan, "The Xhosa Cattle-Killing, 1856-57", Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, n.d. pp. 63-64.

<sup>6</sup>Peires, The Dead Will Arise.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 176.

Sarhili, the Gcaleka chief and national paramount, became the champion of this heroic yet tragic movement. Loyal to his king, Maqoma became a staunch supporter of the prophecies.<sup>8</sup>

Maqoma's role in the Cattle-Killing has never been described accurately and requires complete re-examination. While there is no doubt that the lung sickness outbreak of 1855 contributed significantly to the following year's Cattle-Killing, Peires simply replaces "superstition" and "delusion" with less racist phrases such as "pre-colonial concepts of disease" and "the Xhosa world view". It is difficult to believe that these abstract reasons could cause an entire society to destroy itself. Assessing the Xhosa chiefs as "economic exploiters of their subjects", Peires claims unconvincingly that these two antagonistic groups, the rulers and the ruled, united in a romantic but doomed national millenarian struggle. Maqoma had fought in three gruelling frontier wars to preserve the control of his chiefly class over Xhosa cattle and land. However, in 1856 he sanctioned a movement which sacrificed all he had strived to maintain. Why did such an intelligent and clever man allow this apocalypse to occur? What were his personal motivations? To what extent have false colonial accusations against Maqoma been retained in the conventional histories? Although Sarhili belonged to the senior line of Xhosa chiefs, Peires has exaggerated his influence. By the early nineteenth century the Gcaleka ruler had lost all control over the chiefdoms west of the Kei River. Why then was Maqoma, a chief within the autonomous Rharhabe state, so intent on obeying Sarhili?

Closer to reality but also flawed is the materialist interpretation of Jack Lewis which suggests that Xhosa chiefs promoted the Cattle-Killing

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 175.

in order to strengthen their declining authority. Lewis criticizes Peires for not "distinguishing between the origin of the ideas of the Cattle-Killing, and the account of why these ideas achieved mass acceptance." While Lewis is correct in his assessment that colonial occupation was destroying traditional rule, he does not explain adequately how the chiefs thought that they could regain power through destroying herds which had always been central to their control of commoners.<sup>10</sup>

Before discussing the Cattle-Killing movement of 1856-57, it is essential to examine the nature of Xhosa pastoralism. In The House of Phalo Peires presents two distinct forms of cattle-holding in Xhosa society. Firstly, wealthy individuals, such as chiefs, lent cattle to poorer men who cared for the animals in exchange for milk and calves. Under this busa or nqoma system, the owner could repossess his cattle at any time. Secondly, the majority of cattle were in the possession of homestead heads who could exercise independent control of them. Although Peires admits that Xhosa society recognized the chief as ultimate owner of all the cattle and land, he claims that this position had little real power.<sup>11</sup> However, the evidence presented by Peires contradicts his egalitarian view of the pre-colonial Xhosa socio-economic system. In reality, most cattle were part of Peires's first category. According to William Shaw, a missionary who operated among the Xhosa before their conquest, "the cattle of the tribe are, by a sort of legal fiction of their law, all considered to belong to the chief".<sup>12</sup> Erroneously, Peires seems to interpret Shaw's description to mean that the chiefs' authority was fictional in that they could not exercise control over the herds which

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<sup>10</sup>Jack Lewis, "Materialism and Idealism in the Historiography of the Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement 1856-7", South African Historical Journal 25 (1991), pp. 244-268.

<sup>11</sup>Peires, The House of Phalo, pp. 33-34.

<sup>12</sup>William Shaw, The Story of My Mission in South-Eastern Africa, (London, 1860), p. 437. Quoted in Peires, The House of Phalo, p. 34.



they claimed. In fact, as a missionary Shaw was criticising the "despotism" of the Xhosa rulers and he employed the term "fiction" to express moral outrage over the chiefs' ownership of cattle cared for by the common people. Considering the remainder of Shaw's account, Peires's conclusions are surprising. The missionary stated that a chief's:

mode of securing retainers is by giving them hire stock from time to time, it is considered that all the cattle possessed by them have been derived either from those granted by himself, or such as had been given in previous generations, by his ancestors to their forefathers. Hence, the punishment for great crimes is what they expressly call "eating up" that is, the chief deprives the unfortunate culprit of the whole of his property which it is considered... he has a right to do; since in carrying off the cattle and other property of the offender he is only resuming his own.

In pre-colonial times Xhosa chiefs controlled their subjects through a system of pastoral patronage. Owning most of the chiefdom's cattle, the ruler lent stock to his subordinate petty chiefs and headman on an increased-sharing basis. These mid-level aristocrats could build-up privately owned and controlled herds through claiming a percentage of the calves of the royal cattle they kept on loan. In turn, these wealthy individuals had commoner subjects care for their cattle, both loan and non-loan, in exchange for milk and curds. Those at the bottom of the socio-economic scale subsisted primarily on agricultural products. Aristocrats and both rich and poor commoners were kept in line by the chiefly threat of cattle repossession. Concurrently, a cattle-wealthy chief would attract new followers, and loyal subjects were rewarded with additional patronage. The many political factions within Xhosa society had been caused by subordinate chiefs developing large private herds and then breaking off to form self-sufficient, autonomous states.<sup>13</sup> This

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<sup>13</sup>This social system has been identified in J.B. Webster, "Typology of African Pre-Colonial Social Formations", Dalhousie Seminar Paper, 1983; Adam Kuper, Wives for Cattle: Bridewealth and Marriage in Southern Africa, (London, 1982), pp. 14-18; William Beinart, The Political Economy of Pondoland, 1860-1930, (Johannesburg, 1982), pp. 14-15; Jean Comaroff, Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance, (London, 1985), pp. 68-71; and Crais, White Supremacy and Black Resistance, p. 19. For a broad discussion of Xhosa pastoral patronage and its relationship to the Cattle-Killing see Timothy

system was observed and recorded by many European travellers. Writing in the 1850's, William Holden, a former missionary in Xhosaland, reported that:

The retainers of a chief serve him for cattle; nor is it expected that he could maintain his influence, or indeed secure any number of followers, if unable to provide them with what at once constitutes their money, food, and clothing.<sup>14</sup>

In 1807 Ludwig Alberti wrote that the Xhosa chiefs' controlled all the cattle and a commoner could "not reduce his herd by a single head".<sup>15</sup> Chief Hintsa of the Gcaleka told his son, Sarhili, that "if you have cattle, poor men will not pass by your place. No, he will stop with you".<sup>16</sup> During drought social tension would increase as chiefs would ensure their own survival by repossessing cattle from hungry commoners. In the 1830's James Laing, another missionary, witnessed chiefs and their retainers taking hundreds of cattle from drought stricken homesteaders.<sup>17</sup> These were hardly the actions of a weak aristocracy. As Peires states, "the struggle between chiefs and commoners took the form of a struggle for cattle". While Peires describes Xhosa society as "somewhat analogous to Western Europe in the Middle Ages"<sup>18</sup>, he fails to recognize the depth which feudal-like pastoral patronage was used by the chiefs to dominate

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J. Stapleton, "'They No Longer Care For Their Chiefs'; Another Look at the Xhosa Cattle-Killing of 1856-57", International Journal of African Historical Studies, Vol. 24, No. 2, (1991), pp. 383-392. While the fractionalised nature of Xhosa society was obvious by the sheer number of chiefdoms, this paper does not subscribe to W.D. Hammond-Tooke's theory that the kingdom split mechanistically every generation and that the separate Xhosa polities were not related. See Hammond-Tooke, "Segmentation and Fission in Cape Nguni Political Units", Africa, 35 (1965), pp. 143-166.

<sup>14</sup>William Holden, The Past and Future of the Kaffir Races, (Cape Town, 1866), p. 327.

<sup>15</sup>Balkema, (ed.), Alberti's Account of the Xhosa, p. 23.

<sup>16</sup>(CL) MS 15,429, J. Ayliff to Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, 30 July 1835.

<sup>17</sup>(CL) MS 16,579, Journal of Laing, 29 October and 7 November 1836.

<sup>18</sup>Peires, The House of Phalo, pp. 32-33.

political and social activity. Royal cattle ensured chiefly control.

At the close of the War of the Axe in 1847 the Cape Colony had subjected all the Xhosa between the Keiskamma and Kei rivers to military rule. This included both divisions of the Rharhabe, Sandile's Ngqika and Mhala's Ndlambe, and the coastal Gqunukhwebe of Chief Phato. Only Sarhili's Gcaleka kingdom, in its trans-Keian homeland, remained independent. As colonial depredation commenced, the British sought to undermine the traditional aristocracy. While the chiefs and headmen still governed their people, all fines of cattle had to be turned over to European commissioners. The ban on repossession of loan-cattle damaged aristocratic authority. Another blow to royal domination was the colonial prohibition on witchcraft executions. Having someone "smelt out" as a sorcerer, was the device used by chiefs to legitimize the elimination of their enemies. Many of the most practical elements of Xhosa society were camouflaged with mystical overtones. Colonial rule had destroyed both the economic and coercive levers of aristocratic control. In 1850, a young Ndlambe commoner, Mlanjeni, rocketed to public popularity by calling for the slaughter of royal cattle. While Mlanjeni was the first cattle-killing prophet, he did not mention anything about cultivation in his instructions. Indeed, his appeal to the agricultural commoners is illustrated in the following praise:

he (Mlanjeni) sows the seeds of corn with  
his hands, he conjures them to germinate and  
grow in an instant, and these seeds germinate  
thus, shooting out green stems and developing  
before one's eyes.<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, Peires is incorrect to claim that a ban on cultivation was connected to the slaughter of cattle even before the visions of Nongqawuse.<sup>20</sup> Late in the same year Sandile and Maqoma rebelled against

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<sup>19</sup>Peires, The Dead Will Arise, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p 72.

the colonial government to overshadow Mlanjeni and regain their "fading" legitimacy and authority.<sup>21</sup> After crushing the last Ngqika resistance in 1853 Sir George Cathcart, Governor of the Cape Colony, realized that a less rapid dissolution of traditional society would better serve British interests. Consequently, he restored the aristocratic right to levy cattle fines and instructed his subordinates to ignore the prohibition on witchcraft executions.<sup>22</sup> Through this seemingly minor concession, the chiefs managed to retain a tenuous hold on power. However, it was too little and too late.

In the post-war settlement of 1853 Governor Cathcart used territorial ownership to punish enemies and reward friends. Maqoma and his people were in the former category. Since the 1790's the Ngqika Xhosa had occupied the natural fortress of the Amatola mountains. During the War of Mlanjeni this range, located in northwest British Kaffraria, had protected Sandile's and Maqoma's rebels from colonial forces. Cathcart drove the Ngqika out of the lush forests of their mountainous sanctuary, and settled them on the open plain between the eastern foothills of the Amatolas and the western bank of the Kei River. These legendary mountains became a Crown Reserve inhabited by garrisons of British soldiers. Maqoma was allotted the southernmost portion of the new Ngqika location. This put the veteran warrior under the close supervision of the European troops at nearby King William's Town. Bordered to the north by the Khubusi River and to the south by the road running east toward the Great Kei Drift, Maqoma's new territory was a mere five miles wide and thirty miles long. Compounding this problem, the Dange chiefdoms of Bhotomane and Tola, long-time tributaries of the Ngqika and rebels in the last war, were co-located

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<sup>21</sup>for the decline of chiefly power as a cause for the war of 1850-53 see PRO, CO 879/1, 16 February 1850, Draft Report on the Territories Adjacent to the Cape of Good Hope, p. 5; and Brownlee, Reminiscences, pp. 312-313.

<sup>22</sup>(CA) GH 8/28, Cathcart to C. Brownlee, 17 March 1853.

with Maqoma. Overcrowding resulted. Ruling over 3000 subjects in 47 kraals, Maqoma had to accommodate an additional 2000 individuals in 35 separate villages.<sup>23</sup> It was a far cry from the 1820's when the young chief had ventured west into the vast Kat River valley to establish a new chiefdom. Maqoma had been pushed over 100 miles east of the Fort Beaufort district he and his subjects had inhabited throughout the 1830's and 40's. Although Mhala's Ndlambe and Phato's Gqunukhwebe were also subject to British hegemony, their collaboration in the last conflict gained them control of all southern Kaffraria.

Throughout the remainder of the 1850's, Maqoma embarked on a campaign to regain his ancestral homeland. Even before the official end of hostilities in 1853, the tenacious chief was petitioning the British government on behalf of the Ngqika. In late February Charles Brownlee, Commissioner to Sandile's chiefdom, met the rebel leaders to discuss the terms of surrender under which they would be pardoned. Despite the presence of Sandile, Maqoma spoke for the entire Ngqika population. Thanking the colony for the land they had been offered, the aging aristocrat prayed "that the Governor will present to the Sovereign who rules him...that we be permitted to return to the lands out of which we have been driven".<sup>24</sup> Reoccupying the Amatolas was vital. Maqoma knew only that sanctuary could preserve traditional society from eventual destruction by the white conquerors. On the ninth of March 1853 the Ngqika chiefs surrendered to Governor Cathcart and Maqoma eloquently and diplomatically represented his people's grievances:

We thank the Governor for taking us out of  
the bush, and giving us a place to live in.

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<sup>23</sup>Holden, The Past and Future, p. 160. It is difficult to estimate the number of cattle in Maqoma's chiefdom during this period. However, in 1848 the colonial census of British Kaffraria stated that he had 2000 head. Accounting for losses from the 1850-53 war, it might be safe to say that Maqoma, in 1854, had between 1000 and 1500 cattle.

<sup>24</sup>(CA) BK 69, Brownlee to Maclean, 9 March 1853.

When a child errs, he is punished, and forgiven; this young man (Sandile) erred, has been punished and is forgiven, but the country you have given him is too small. Toyise, who occupied it before had but a small tribe. Sandile has a large one, which will find no room there... We look to you to speak for us, and to represent our case to the Queen. We are her subjects.<sup>25</sup>

However, in respectful tones Cathcart informed the chiefs that they would never be allowed to reclaim their military stronghold, the Amatolas. During this immediate post-war period the old rivalry between Sandile and Maqoma resurfaced. In late March Maqoma complained to Brownlee that "Sandile did not exert proper authority over his people and even in the matter of collecting fines he manifested little energy".<sup>26</sup> Neglect of royal duties at such a critical time threatened to further weaken the chiefs' hold over their subjects. Furthermore, Maqoma must have thought that Sandile, as the Ngqika paramount, could have more vigorously supported his appeal to Queen Victoria. In June 1853 Fingoes, Xhosa commoners who had been captured by colonial labour raids in the 1820's and 30's, were moved into the Amatola Crown Reserve. By the 1850's these Fingoes were led by British appointed chiefs and were evolving into a distinct ethnicity dependent on colonial patronage. It is possible that many of Maqoma's and Sandile's subjects were left behind after the post-war expulsion and were now being Fingoized by the European administration.<sup>27</sup> Enraged, both Sandile and Maqoma, in July 1853, approached Brownlee and indignantly demanded an answer to their petition.

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<sup>25</sup>Correspondence of Cathcart, p. 268, Government Notice, 12 March 1853.

<sup>26</sup>(CA) BK 69, Brownlee to Maclean, 24 March 1853.

<sup>27</sup>For Fingo identity see chapters three and four and Webster, "Land Expropriation and Labour Extraction". Concealing their illegal labour raids, British officers in the 1820's and 1830's informed their superiors in London that the Fingo were a tribe from Natal which had fled the tyranny of Shaka Zulu only to be enslaved by the Xhosa. They were supposedly rescued by the British army and brought to the safety of the colony. This myth became an historical orthodoxy. In reality, they were Xhosa people from many chiefdoms, including Maqoma's, who had been taken into the colony by force or went willingly to avoid war-induced starvation. In the 1940's white anthropologists coined the term Mfengu as an africanisation of Fingo.

Speaking fluent Xhosa, the Commissioner told them bluntly that their homeland had been seized as punishment for the 1850 rebellion and they had no hope of ever regaining it.<sup>28</sup> Magoma was not convinced. Early the next month he sent his Great Son, Namba, to ask Brownlee if he alone might be allowed back into the Crown Reserve. Although Namba had remained neutral in the last war, the Commissioner recognized Magoma's attempt to gain a foothold in the Amatolas and denied the request.<sup>29</sup> When colonial agents began passing out presents of seed and agricultural implements to the Xhosa people, they were subtly undermining the reliance of commoners on aristocratic cattle.<sup>30</sup> Throughout 1854 the Ngqika watched as the pleas of their chiefs were ignored and thousands of Fingoes, who had escaped traditional authority, claimed the Amatolas.

Further disasters plagued Magoma. A drought during the 1855 growing season caused his people's crops to fail.<sup>31</sup> However, the other chiefdoms had more fertile land and were not affected so dramatically. As their forefathers had done, Magoma and his headmen survived this ordeal by pulling some of their cattle back from the pyramid of commoner patrons. Although this enraged the already frustrated population, they were able to feed on the reserve stores from the previous year. Unfortunately, the flight of the community out of the Amatolas in 1853 and the reduced size of their overcrowded new home caused the granaries to be much smaller than normal. This made the effect of the aristocratic cattle repossessions all the more devastating. Realizing that he needed a much larger and less arid location, Magoma, in February 1855, sent a desperate message to the colonial governor and High Commissioner of British Kaffraria, Sir George

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<sup>28</sup>(CA) BK 69, Brownlee to Maclean, 14 July 1853.

<sup>29</sup>(CA) BK 69, Brownlee to Maclean, 4 August 1853.

<sup>30</sup>(CA) BK 69, Brownlee's note, 18 November 1853.

<sup>31</sup>(CA) BK 82, H. Lucas to Maclean, 25 August 1856. Lucas reported that "lack of moisture" had caused Magoma's crops to fail in 1855.

Grey:

The Gaikas(Nggika) say they have no country, they pray that their former country be given to them. Sandile says, am I not your child? Why when I am punished am I deprived of the land of my people? Why am I sent from the grave of my father? The inheritance of a chief is not cattle, it is lands and men; saying this, I pray to you my father to whom I have been given. I have no other word, I ask alone for land.<sup>32</sup>

Grey's reply to Maqoma stated that he could not "permit them to return to the country which they ask" and continued by describing the chief's present location "as great as the habitable part of the country in which the Gaikas formerly dwelt".<sup>33</sup> While Sandile and Anta may have had reasonably fertile and spacious areas, Maqoma must have been angered by such an uninformed response. In any case, the veteran chief's country was about to become much less "habitable".

In 1855 Maqoma became alarmed when a lungsickness epizootic originating in the colony started to destroy the herds of his southern neighbours and spread across the Kei to ravage Sarhili. Located so close to the contaminated areas, Maqoma desperately pleaded with the government to let him back in the high Amatola sanctuary. Although the chief moved his people away from the wagon road<sup>34</sup>, it was only a matter of time before cattle from the south crossed into his territory and infected his herds. Luckily, by early 1856 this had not yet occurred. The lungsickness provided Sir George Grey with an opportunity to accelerate the erosion of Xhosa chiefly power. Colonel John Maclean, the Chief Commissioner of British Kaffraria, informed the governor that:

The prevailing cattle-sickness will probably

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<sup>32</sup>(CA) BK 70, Statement of Maqoma, 21 February 1855.

<sup>33</sup>(CA) BK 70, Grey to Maqoma, 22 February 1855.

<sup>34</sup>Robert Wilmot, A Cape Traveller's Diary 1856 (Johannesburg, 1984), p. 63. In early March 1856 Wilmot visited Maqoma and noticed that because of the cattle-sickness he had moved his people away from the Kei road.



so far reduce the number of cattle in British Kaffraria, that the advantages which the chiefs and councillors derived from this barbarous mode of administering justice (cattle fines) are likely, for some time, to be so far diminished, that the present moment presents a most favourable opportunity for introducing a new system for the administration of justice amongst the Kaffir population.<sup>35</sup>

In exchange for small government salaries, chiefs were encouraged to give up all judicial authority to white magistrates. Europeans were both deciding cases and collecting cattle fines, and witchcraft executions were once again prohibited. After warning Sandile to "well consider what he is doing" and "not be tempted by the money", Maqoma, in December 1855, reluctantly became the last Ngqika chief to submit to Maclean's new system.<sup>36</sup> Brownlee thought that the old chief would accept a magistrate purely to "snub Sandile".<sup>37</sup> By late January 1856, Maqoma had visited Maclean at Fort Murray to request "a magistrate with a separate location -

I want a clever and experienced man as a magistrate, I do not want a fool".<sup>38</sup> Within a few months Sandile's councillors were complaining that the new system was "breaking down the native customs".<sup>39</sup> In April 1856 Maqoma was presented with his own British magistrate, the young Lieutenant Henry Lucas. The youth of this new official was an insult to the fifty-seven year old chief. When Lucas was introduced to Maqoma, the chief became angry and claimed that "when I told Maclean I was ready to receive a magistrate and money I said I wanted land also".<sup>40</sup> Upon being told that the governor's letter was the final word on the matter, the chief regained

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<sup>35</sup>PP, C.2096 of 1856, Papers Relative to the State of the Kaffir Tribes, Maclean to Grey, 26 July 1855. This letter is also published in the Grahamstown Journal 16 May 1857.

<sup>36</sup>(CA) GH 8/27, Brownlee to Maclean, 6 December 1855.

<sup>37</sup>(CA) GH 8/27, Brownlee to Maclean, 26 December 1855.

<sup>38</sup>(CA) GH 8/28, Maclean to Liddle, 31 January 1856.

<sup>39</sup>(CA) GH 8/28, Maclean to Liddle, 16 March 1856.

<sup>40</sup>(CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 22 April 1856.

his composure and warned Lucas to:

ask, ask, and never tire, and never say  
"The Governor has refused, I cannot ask  
again" he (Lucas) must continue to ask our  
friends; who by perseverance in forwarding  
our applications, in former times got back  
land for us.<sup>41</sup>

Assuring Maqoma that he would refer all his requests to the Chief Commissioner, Lucas established a residency at Hangman's Bush near the safety of King William's Town. The stationing of a colonial agent with Maqoma prompted Sandile to complain to his magistrate, Brownlee, that the government was encouraging his subordinate chiefs to develop too much autonomy. The Ngqika paramount objected to Maqoma having a separate magistrate and claimed that his own salary was not sufficiently higher than the vassal rulers.<sup>42</sup> The colonial plan was working. "We do not want centralization among the Kaffirs", wrote Maclean, "but division". Brownlee noticed that "on most occasions" Maqoma "either disregards or treats slightly, the wishes and measures of Sandile".<sup>43</sup> The paramount became further alienated when some teenage boys from Maqoma's and Bhotomane's groups engaged in a stick fight and a grandson of the latter was accidentally killed. The two chiefs, long-time friends and allies in many frontier wars, flatly rejected Sandile's attempts to mediate the dispute and impose a cattle fine on one of Maqoma's kraals. Following this incident, the old chief tried to convince his half-brothers Anta and Khoxho, and his nephews Oba and Feni to abandon the paramount and place themselves and their subjects under the jurisdiction of Hangman's Bush. Angrily, Anta and the others refused.<sup>44</sup> While Brownlee reported in May

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., Maqoma seems to have been referring to the Glenelg Dispatch of 1836 which restored the Province of Queen Adelaide to independent Xhosa control.

<sup>42</sup>(CA) BK 70, Brownlee to Maclean, 3 May 1856.

<sup>43</sup>For Maclean's statement see (CA) GH 8/28, Maclean to Brownlee, 27 February 1856; for Brownlee's see (CA) GH 8/28, Brownlee to Maclean, 22 March 1856.

<sup>44</sup>(CA) GH 8/28, Ayliff to Maclean, 29 April 1856.

1856 that the Ngqika were tranquil and not affected by lungsickness,<sup>45</sup> a conflict was developing between Magoma and his younger superior, Sandile.

The revolution began! Lungsickness had killed so many of Mhala's and Phato's cattle that they could no longer rely on pastoral patronage to control their people. To make matters worse, the collaboration of these leaders in 1850 destroyed their popular appeal. In 1807 a similar but less severe epizootic had caused rebelliousness among Ngqika's subjects. However, without colonial restrictions that chief was able to move his kraals away from the infected area.<sup>46</sup> With the weakening of political authority in 1855 the people turned to their religious leaders. Throughout the last part of the year five prophets emerged in southern Kaffraria and appealed to their countrymen to throw off the yoke of the chiefs by slaughtering the remaining royal herds.<sup>47</sup> Since the banning of the smelling out ritual had eliminated the method by which the chiefs silenced critics, Mhala and Phato had no choice but to sanction the movement. It was the only way they could retain a semblance of aristocratic power and privilege. However, this did not occur without a struggle. Contrary to Peires's account, the initial Cattle-Killing prophets, beginning with Mlanjeni, only demanded that the commoners sacrifice the chiefs' stock. Within Seyolo's section of the Ndlambe, a commoner known as "Kweukwe" urged the people to kill cattle but actively directed cultivation. Attempting to stop the revolution, the southern chiefs introduced a ban on agriculture to the ideology of the movement. They hoped that if the commoners were required to destroy their own crops the prophets would lose popularity and some royal cattle would be spared.

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<sup>45</sup>(CA) BK 70, Brownlee to Maclean, 3 May 1856.

<sup>46</sup>Balkema, Alberti's Account of the Xhosa, p. 116.

<sup>47</sup>(CA) GH 8/27, 30 September 1855, C. Canham to B. Nicholson, 30 September 1855 enclosed in Maclean to J. Jackson, 16 October 1855. Any call to slaughter cattle was, in essence, an attack on chiefly power and patronage.

In Kama's chiefdom the wife of a cattle-wealthy councillor demanded that the people refrain from planting. It is possible that she was an agent of the rich upper-strata who wanted to undermine the movement. Phato was instrumental in this plot and a year later Charles Brownlee claimed that this Gqunukhwebe chief had not cultivated in 1855 to "show his people the folly" of obeying the prophets.<sup>48</sup> The plan back-fired. As the nominal owners of the land the chiefs had always been the ones to order cultivation. In the chaos of the revolution the prohibition on planting became an accepted part of its anti-aristocratic objectives.<sup>49</sup> The Xhosa Cattle-Killing bears striking similarity to peasant uprisings in medieval Europe which sought to destroy everything connected with the feudal hierarchy. By June 1856 the movement had spread across the Kei and Mhlakaza was claiming that his niece, Nongqawuse, had seen strangers who had told her that the nation would be reborn if all the cattle were killed and no crops planted. While Sarhili had remained neutral during the 1850-53 conflict, colonial forces invaded his chiefdom and seized 40,000 cattle. Such timidity at the height of the European-Xhosa struggle significantly reduced the paramount's legitimacy.<sup>50</sup> Sarhili, who had used the smelling out institution to execute twenty similar prophets the previous year, had now lost so many cattle to lungsickness that he was forced to acquiesce to the commoner rebels and sanction the Cattle-Killing.<sup>51</sup> At this time both Sandile and Magoma, rivals though they were,

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<sup>48</sup>(CA) GH 8/28, Brownlee to Maclean, 11 May 1856. Phato's prohibition of sowing in 1855 indicates that the chiefs were behind that part of the prophecies. Although Peires's claim that all the early prophets banned cultivation is based solely on the letter cited above, Brownlee actually wrote that while two of the initial leaders of the movement were against cultivation, the other three were not. Written a year after the fact, Brownlee's account remembers a point when some of the prophets had begun to accept the chiefly inspired ban on sowing.

<sup>49</sup>Peires, The Dead Will Arise, p. 117, describes the chiefs' role in land ownership and cultivation.

<sup>50</sup>Correspondence of Cathcart, p. 114, Cathcart to Sir J.S. Patington, 20 September 1852.

<sup>51</sup>Vardy and Mathew, (eds.), The Cape Journals of Merriman, p. 221.

had not yet been exposed to the epizootic and could reject the movement simply because they still controlled their people through the ties of pastoral patronage. When messengers from Sarhili arrived at Maqoma's kraal in early July, the chief held a meeting with his councillors. Emerging from several days of intense discussion, Maqoma ignored the national paramount and refused to participate in the movement.<sup>52</sup> This refutes Peires's claim that the chief became a supporter of the Cattle-Killing because of his loyalty to Sarhili. Fear of the revolution going on so close to his own area, prompted Maqoma's frantic appeals for land in the Amatolas. Devastation loomed near.

By August 1856 the granaries of Maqoma's drought stricken chiefdom became exhausted. While purchasing desperately needed maize from the Gcaleka, Maqoma's subjects became excited by news of the cattle-killing occurring across the Kei.<sup>53</sup> On the brink of starvation, the commoners responded to the rumours which emanated from both east and south and started killing royal stock. It was no accident that the first cattle sacrifices in Maqoma's location occurred in Bhotomane's community which was closest to the Kei road. Both lungsickness and rumours of cattle-killing arrived in that area first. At this point the slaughter in Maqoma's kraals was very limited and done as much out of sheer hunger than as an attempt to overthrow the chiefs who remained fat on meat and milk while the commoners starved on roots and thorns. Approaching the Fingoes in the Amatolas, some of the chief's subjects traded royal cattle for goats and maize.<sup>54</sup> These items would stave off famine and were not under aristocratic control. On the eleventh of August Sarhili sent another

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<sup>52</sup>For the events at Maqoma's kraal see (CA) GH 8/29, Lucas to Maclean, 7 July 1856. In (CA) GH 8/29, Gawler to Maclean, 14 July 1856, the Ndlambe Magistrate states that both Sandile and Maqoma sent messages to Sarhili rejecting the prophecies.

<sup>53</sup>(CA) GH 8/29, Lucas to Maclean, 25 August 1856.

<sup>54</sup>(CL) MS 9043, Journal of Laing 3 September 1856.

message to Maqoma urging him to sanction the movement and slaughter his cattle in order to preserve the aristocracy.<sup>55</sup> Namba was dispatched across the Kei and was convinced by the national paramount that supporting the Cattle-Killing was the only way for the chiefs to survive. Returning from this errand, Namba slaughtered four of his own cattle.<sup>56</sup> Kona, Maqoma's eldest son and rival of Namba, begged his father not to accept such advice.<sup>57</sup> Brownlee observed that the prophetic rumours were carried into the Ngqika territory by common people who then urged their chiefs to sanction a general slaughter.<sup>58</sup> Throughout September Maqoma remained uncommitted to the Cattle-Killing as only a few of his followers were participating and late in the month Lucas reported that the chiefdom was operating in a very orderly fashion.<sup>59</sup> While Maqoma supported Sandile and publicly opposed the slaughter, Brownlee believed that the aged warrior chief was making covert overtures to the Mhlakaza party. At the same time Mhala, the Ndlambe chief and self-proclaimed believer in the prophecies, sent a secret message to Maqoma asking him for advice on how to deal with the Cattle-Killing. Responding cautiously, Maqoma told Mhala that the movement had far too much mass support for them to use coercion against it.<sup>60</sup> Both these chiefs, who were later categorized as zealous believers in the prophecies, were seeking covertly to undermine the Cattle-Killing.

In October 1856 lungsickness finally hit Maqoma's herds and

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<sup>55</sup>(CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 13 August 1856.

<sup>56</sup>(CA) BK 69, Brownlee to Maclean, 11 August 1856.

<sup>57</sup>(CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 26 October 1856.

<sup>58</sup>(CA) BK 70, Brownlee to Maclean, 22 August 1856. While Peires has identified the leading role of commoners in the Cattle-Killing, he has mistakenly assumed that chiefs and subjects shared the same interests. See Peires, The Dead Will Arise, p. 176.

<sup>59</sup>(CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 29 September 1856.

<sup>60</sup>(CA) BK 70, Brownlee to Maclean, 9 August 1856. Brownlee had many spies operating within the Ngqika chiefdoms and as a fluent Xhosa speaker who was raised in that society he was not at the mercy of interpreters.

devastated his system of cattle-based patronage.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, in order to remain in his chiefly position, Maqoma was forced to become a "believer" in the prophecies.<sup>62</sup> However, this experienced politician could not sit idle while his chieftdom was destroyed. Playing the role of a zealous umthamba<sup>63</sup>, the experienced chief stressed the part of the prophecies which banned cultivation and never publicly mentioned cattle slaughtering. In doing this Maqoma's aim was two fold. Firstly, reviving the failed plot of the southern chiefs, Maqoma thought that if his hungry subjects were forbidden to cultivate they might stop the sacrifice of royal cattle. After all, because of the 1855 drought it was now essential for the commoners to sow their fields or face the prospect of ultimate starvation. Years after the crisis one of Maqoma's minor sons, Tini, admitted that when he killed all his cattle his father became extremely angry.<sup>64</sup> Secondly, observing that the magistrates seemed afraid of the Cattle-Killing and desperately wanted the Xhosa to plant their crops, Maqoma was trying to pressure the regime into giving him more and better land. Movement into the Amatolas would also separate his people from the influence of the southern and eastern rebels. Late in October an anxious Maqoma told Lucas that:

their not sowing had reference to the land question, that neither his people nor himself would again sow in the country they now occupy nor would they listen to anything the government had to say to them as long as they were living here.<sup>65</sup>

Throughout this episode Maqoma relied on his government salary to ensure

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<sup>61</sup>(CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 15 October 1856.

<sup>62</sup>(CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 26 October 1856.

<sup>63</sup>Xhosa word to describe a believer in the Cattle-Killing prophecies. Jeffrey Peires identified the amathamba as soft and generous and the amagogotya (non-believers) as hard and stingy. See Peires, The Dead Will Arise.

<sup>64</sup>Statement of Tini Maqoma, interview by Sir George Cory, Lovedale, 16 October 1908, in Berning, Conversations of George Cory, p. 106.

<sup>65</sup>(CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 26 October 1856.

his family's survival. It was a desperate gamble. If the Europeans gave in to his demands then Maqoma would move to a new area away from the lungsickness and prophecies of his present position. Maqoma's sons took opposite paths. Namba supported his father. Kona opposed him. Bhotomane and Tola had also been devastated by the epizootic and followed the great Maqoma's example. It must be understood that none of the chiefs, whether believers or unbelievers, dared reveal the true nature of the Cattle-Killing to the Europeans as it indicated that their entire system of social control was literally falling apart. Brownlee, who had grown up among the Xhosa, recognized that the decline of chiefly authority had contributed to the Cattle-Killing.<sup>66</sup>

Xhosa oral tradition does not remember Maqoma as a supporter of the prophecies. The late Chief Gladstone Maqoma told Jeffrey Peires that Maqoma had refused to slaughter his herds. However, Peires dismissed this statement as an example of erroneous and unreliable oral history.<sup>67</sup> Although the narratives relating to Maqoma's participation in this event are limited, they are definitely consistent. Confirming the colonial documentary evidence, most informants claim that Namba had been sent across the Kei to investigate the movement.<sup>68</sup> Subsequent cattle-killing in Maqoma's chiefdom is blamed almost entirely on Namba's incompetent acceptance of the foolish predictions. "It was Namba!"<sup>69</sup> Maqoma and Kona are portrayed as wise chiefs who rejected the wild demands of Mhlakaza and

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<sup>66</sup>Brownlee, Reminiscences, p. 144.

<sup>67</sup>Statement of Chief Gladstone Maqoma, interviewed by J.B. Peires, Gqungqe Location, Kentani District, 19 January 1976. For Peires's criticism see his The House of Phalo, p. 258.

<sup>68</sup>Interviews with Mr. J.W. Ngqabavu and Chief L.W. Maqoma.

<sup>69</sup>Interview with Chief L.W. Maqoma. Since this informant has usurped the Maqoma chieftaincy from Namba's descendants, he may be attempting to discredit that line. However, L. Maqoma has an extensive knowledge of oral traditions concerning the original Maqoma and his information on Namba is supported by colonial documents, see footnote 54.



Nongqawuse. "Maqoma never accepted this". "Maqoma never participated in the Cattle-Killing". "Kona and Maqoma were not involved in that episode".<sup>70</sup> While the Maqoma family and its councillors may be trying to hide embarrassing facts, informants who have never met and who live in distant locations tell roughly the same story. Sources outside this extended group tend to know very little or nothing about Maqoma's role in the Cattle-Killing.<sup>71</sup> Despite its description of Maqoma as a committed believer in Nongqawuse's prophecies, Peires's The Dead Will Arise does not utilize existing traditions from the remnants of his chiefdom. These narratives provide an interesting contradiction to the orthodox European interpretations.

Why did Maqoma's principle sons disagree over the Cattle-Killing? As Kona, the older Right Hand son, had ruled his own vassal community for some time it was not in his interests to support the movement. Through years of increased-sharing, he had developed a substantial private herd. Since Kona had lost less cattle to the lungsickness than Maqoma's other petty chiefs, his pastoral patronage retained its effectiveness and as he was not the heir he did not have to worry about inheriting a ravaged chiefdom. Kona wanted to break away and establish his own pastoral feudal community. This was an established tradition for Rharhabe Right Hand sons. Maqoma himself had done it. However, Kona's moving away at the time of the Cattle-Killing had drastic effects on his father's chiefdom. By December 1856 six of the moderately wealthy headmen who still had enough cattle to control their subjects joined Kona near the King William's Town hospital.<sup>72</sup> Maqoma's support of the movement was literally driving them away and the old chief could do little to stop them as

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<sup>70</sup>Interviews with Mr. W.M. Gqirhana, Mr J. Mncono, and Mr. W. Tukashe.

<sup>71</sup>For example see the interview with Bryce and Joel Kaka, Ngqele Location, Middledrift District, 22 October 1991.

<sup>72</sup>(CA) GH 8/49, D. Davies to Maclean, 20 November 1856.

colonial law forbade coercive measures. With the support of Doctor J.P. Fitzgerald, Kona requested permission to take 100 families (1000 people) from his father's area and establish a separate chiefdom within the location of the Christian Gqunukhwebe chief Kama near the Crown Reserve. Suspecting a plot between Kona and Maqoma to gain a foothold in the Amatolas, Maclean rejected the proposal. Eventually, Kona and his followers were sent to Fort Murray and placed under the supervision of the Christian chief, Dyani Tshatshu.<sup>73</sup> Namba was the younger Great Son. Since he had not ruled a portion of Maqoma's chiefdom for a long period, he did not have large private herds to protect.<sup>74</sup> His primary interest lay in preserving the chieftainship which he was destined to inherit. With this position would come wealth and power. The only way to do this was to support the movement and Maqoma's attempt to subvert it from within. As a younger and poorer man Namba may have actually sympathized with the commoner revolutionaries and he became Maqoma's ambassador to Sarhili and Mhlakaza during the crisis. When the slaughter subsided Namba was extremely active in trying to rebuild the royal herds so that he might have something to inherit. Clearly, the division of Maqoma's sons had its roots in established pre-colonial traditions and their position in a changing political economy.

The Cattle-Killing bitterly fractionalised the Ngqika chiefs. In late 1856 Sandile's leadership of the Rharhabe seemed to have been wavering. While the paramount had a meeting of his own councillors in November to discuss Nongqawuse's visions, Sandile failed to give any instructions to his vassal chiefs. Throughout November and December Sandile's confidence weakened but since the lungsickness had not yet

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<sup>73</sup>(CA) GH 8/30, Schedule 370, Maclean to Liddle, 28 December 1856.

<sup>74</sup>At the time of the time of the Cattle-Killing Kona was 38 and Namba roughly 26. During 1835 C.L. Stretch estimated the ages of Kona and Namba to be 17 and five, respectively. See le Cordeur, The Journal of Stretch, p. 140.

entered his area he could afford to oppose the movement. With little guidance from his inept half-brother, Maqoma continued with his plan to covertly undermine the prophecies and simultaneously use them as a lever to gain government land concessions. Conversely, since Anta's herds, inhabiting the isolated Thomas River in the north of the Ngqika territory, were never attacked by lungsickness, that chief was not faced with a serious collapse of his pastoral patronage system.<sup>75</sup> Upon hearing that the governor had refused to give him more land, Maqoma flew into a rage shouting:

I am not going to war with the government,  
but my being kept in this part of the  
country is sufficient provocation for me  
to throw assegais at the Governor.<sup>76</sup>

That portion of Maqoma's plan seemed to be failing. Additionally, Sandile's, Anta's, and the government's opposition to the Cattle-Killing only served to give increased momentum to its zealous anti-royalist revolutionaries. Furious with the young king, Maqoma sent repeated messages to Sandile urging him to destroy the movement by banning all cultivation:

Are you a chief (Maqoma asked Sandile) and  
led by black men (commoners), who are Tyala,  
Xokwam, Mxamisa, and Mghate (Sandile's unbelieving  
councillors) that they should cultivate  
against the orders of Sarhili and Mhlakaza  
and why do you do the same? Show your authority  
and put these men to death and discontinue  
your cultivation.<sup>77</sup>

The paramount refused. After all, not having lost any cattle to the epizootic there was little reason for Sandile to place his own herds in jeopardy to save his rival half-brother. Brownlee reminded the paramount that Maqoma had been behind a plot to burn Suthu for witchcraft.<sup>78</sup> At the

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<sup>75</sup>For more information on Anta see Peires, The Dead Will Arise, p. 168.

<sup>76</sup>(CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 29 November 1856.

<sup>77</sup>(CA) BK 71, Brownlee to Maclean, 15 January 1857.

<sup>78</sup>Brownlee, Reminiscences, p. 156.

height of Maqoma's performance he claimed to have seen two of Ngqika's councillors who had risen from the dead. Claiming to know the old chief's character, Henry Calderwood, a former missionary, saw this as a clear indication that "Maqoma did not believe Mhlakaza's prophecies, but was using them for his own purposes".<sup>79</sup> Paradoxically, around the same time Maqoma visited the native hospital in King William's Town for medical treatment and informed Doctor Fitzgerald that "I believe in your work because I see it with my eyes".<sup>80</sup> The chief's dangerous game continued.

In late November 1856 cattle slaughtering among Maqoma's people began to decrease as commoners became "clamorous" about not planting their crops.<sup>81</sup> This portion of the chief's plan seemed to have had some success. Although he had very few cattle left and his subjects faced the prospect of starvation, Maqoma retained his position and while living on the government salary, he could start rebuilding his herds. Since some people still wanted to overthrow the aristocracy by killing the remaining cattle, it was necessary for Maqoma and Namba to pay lip-service to the movement throughout the last months of 1856. Their position now rested primarily on popular support. However, Maqoma made several visits to Brownlee and Lucas, and attempted to avoid the wrath of the government by claiming that his superiors, Sarhili and Sandile, had been responsible for the holocaust. Brownlee thought that Maqoma had entered the Cattle-Killing for no other reason than to implicate Sandile in it.<sup>82</sup> Tragically, violence between amathamba and amagogotya prevented cultivation, destroyed existing granaries, and forced many people to slaughter many of the remaining royal cattle as an immediate source of

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<sup>79</sup>Calderwood, Caffres and Caffre Missions, p. 216.

<sup>80</sup>(CA) BK 100, Fitzgerald to Maclean, 11 December 1856.

<sup>81</sup>(CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 29 November 1856.

<sup>82</sup>(CA) BK 71, Brownlee to Maclean, 15 January 1857.

food. In January 1857 Lucas reported that "the destruction is wholesale". The chiefdom became a battlefield.<sup>83</sup> A white newspaper correspondent noticed that "the chiefs, even if they had the will, which they do not, have not the power to restrain their people".<sup>84</sup> Maqoma's plan to subvert the movement by stressing the ban on cultivation ultimately failed to save a significant quantity of his cattle. Just as Maqoma's people stopped slaughtering, lung sickness entered Sandile's area and began weakening his system of pastoral patronage. In February 1857 the paramount expelled all unbelievers from his Great Place and sanctioned the movement just a few weeks before widespread famine caused it to dissolve.<sup>85</sup> The nation was in ruins.

With the collapse of the Cattle-Killing revolution, Maqoma set about rebuilding his decimated herds. Realizing that he would soon inherit his fifty-nine year old father's chiefdom, Namba, in March 1857, assisted Maqoma by seizing 38 cattle from a party of Fingoes travelling along the Kei road. The continued rift between Maqoma and Sandile was illustrated by the fact that Namba and his warriors attacked the Fingoes despite the presence of several of the Ngqika paramount's councillors in their ranks.<sup>86</sup> A few days later Maqoma's men stole thirty-nine goats from another Fingo group. When 700 armed Fingo warriors attempted to retrieve their property, Lucas stopped them and the chief gave up sixteen of the animals. It is possible that these Fingoes were actually members of Maqoma's chiefdom who were entering service with the whites. What were Fingoes from the Amatolas doing on the Kei road with well known Xhosa

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<sup>83</sup>For Lucas's statement see (CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 7 January 1857. For violence see (CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 14 February 1857.

<sup>84</sup>Grahamstown Journal 21 February 1857. This report was published before the fabrication of the chiefs' plot in early 1858.

<sup>85</sup>(CA) BK 71, Brownlee to Maclean, 11 February 1857.

<sup>86</sup>(CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 23 March 1857.

elders? If this was the case the chief was only trying to repossess his own stock from deserters. Interestingly, there are accounts of Fingoes emerging from the Rharhabe chiefdoms during the Cattle-Killing. While the colonial government claimed that these people had been slaves who had not been rescued in 1835, they were simply hungry Xhosa who saw a much better chance for survival among the Fingoized groups.<sup>87</sup> Lucas reported Maqoma's actions to John Maclean who demanded that the chief return the stock or be stricken from the colonial payroll. While Maqoma attempted to stall the government by telling Lucas that Namba had carried out the raid on his own, the young magistrate noticed a significant increase in the chief's personal herd. One cow had become four. Eventually, Maqoma was forced to turn the seized cattle and goats over to the colonial authorities. He had no choice. Since Maqoma had not yet rebuilt his herds to the level required for basic subsistence, government money was his family's only means of survival. The frustrated chief told Lucas that:

As His Excellency had given the salary  
he could take it away. But he did not  
understand at the time the money was  
given that it could be taken away for  
the reasons stated.<sup>88</sup>

Namba claimed that he "thought that he received his pension for past not present service".<sup>89</sup> The colonial officials not only foiled Maqoma's attempt to use the Cattle-Killing as a way to gain land concessions, they were now preventing him from reconstructing his chiefdom in the traditional manner. The aged chief grew increasingly hostile toward the Europeans.

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<sup>87</sup>For so called Fingoes leaving the Xhosa see (CL) MS 9043, Journal of Laing, 22 September 1856, 12 and 16 February 1857, 7 and 13 March 1857, and 29 April 1857. Laing was stationed with the Fingo groups in the Amatolas and observed many of these new Fingoes entering the mountains from the Xhosa chiefdoms to the east.

<sup>88</sup>(CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 21 April 1857.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid. Namba received a small annual stipend for saving a missionary's life during the War of Mlanjeni.

In the last days of the Cattle-Killing Sir George Grey set out to destroy the surviving elements of traditional Xhosa society. Thousands of starving and destitute men, women, and children were rounded up by the European magistrates and sent into the colony to work on white farms. The Fingo cover story was no longer required. This was supposed to be a humanitarian act in which the British saved the Xhosa from their own tragic mistake. By June 1857 Brownlee had personally removed 3300 people from Sandile's kraals.<sup>90</sup> Several thousand of Sandile's, Maqoma's, and Bhotomane's subjects fled to Kama near the Crown Reserve but were handed over to Magistrate Frederick Reeve and transported across the border. In March 1857 John Ross, a local missionary, stated that Maqoma was preventing his people from going to work in the colony.<sup>91</sup> This would explain the tension between the chief and Lucas which developed at this time. Anxious to please his superiors, the young magistrate became frustrated when Maqoma resisted his attempts to recruit labour. In the first week of March Maqoma seized the stock, three cows and three goats, of one Fani who was leaving the chiefdom to seek employment. When Lucas demanded that the chief hand over the animals, Maqoma said that he "would not give the fine to the government". According to Lucas, the old chief was trying to use Kona's removal to Fort Murray as an excuse for no longer adhering to magisterial authority. Lucas also thought that he was planning to rebuild his own herd by repossessing most of his people's stock.<sup>92</sup> Furious with Maqoma's resistance to his plans, Grey visited British Kaffraria in late March and ordered the chief to meet him at Fort Murray. When Maqoma failed to report to the governor his salary, and only means of support, was cut off. Many of Maqoma's subjects abandoned their

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<sup>90</sup>(CA) GH 8/50, Brownlee to Maclean, 23 July 1857.

<sup>91</sup>(CL) MS 8172, J. Ross to brother, 14 March 1857.

<sup>92</sup>(CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 7 March 1857.

location to become wage labourers.<sup>93</sup> To stem the flow of hungry people out of his chiefdom, the desperate Magoma, in late May 1857, killed a few of his remaining cattle to provide food. After this last ditch effort the chief only had 180 cattle in his entire location.<sup>94</sup> Lucas was successful in sending most of Bhotomane's followers to European farms. This Dange chiefdom became devoid of both cattle and people.<sup>95</sup> Since Magoma was attempting to block colonial labour recruitment, Maclean and Lucas began to search for a way to remove him.

According to Maclean, as Magoma witnessed the dissolution of his chiefdom, he once again lapsed into alcoholic despair. The chief commissioner reported that Jongumsobomvu began frequenting the taverns of Stutterheim, a new town for German settlers, and was "constantly in a state of intoxication".<sup>96</sup> However, previous colonial attempts to discredit the chief as an unstable drunk have been exposed and it is likely that Maclean may have been engaging in similar slander. There is no other documentary evidence to support the chief commissioner's story and Lucas, who lived much closer to Magoma, did not report it. If Maclean's account was true then Jongumsobomvu's faltering judgement in subsequent events can be understood in light of alcohol abuse. Even if the commissioner's reports were exaggerations or complete misrepresentations, in the coming weeks Magoma would still make some of the worst mistakes of his life.

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<sup>93</sup>For the removal of Magoma from the payroll see (CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 9 April 1857. For people leaving the chiefdom see (CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 10 May 1857.

<sup>94</sup>(CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 30 May 1857.

<sup>95</sup>(CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 17 March 1857.

<sup>96</sup>(CA) GH 8/50, Maclean to Grey, 17 August 1857. It is important to realize that before and during the Cattle-Killing Magoma remained sober. He had not had not had a drink since 1847.



In July 1857 one of his most loyal headmen, Ngomo, was arrested by the colonial Native Police for stealing cattle and was subsequently shot in an escape attempt. Fusani, one of Mhala's headmen and a favourite of that chief's magistrate, Major John Gawler, had both informed on Ngomo and participated in his killing. A few days later Maqoma dispatched a party of armed warriors to take revenge on Fusani's kraal. During the early morning darkness the traitor was murdered and his cattle and gun brought back to Maqoma.<sup>97</sup> Whether the troubled chief had directed his men to kill Fusani is unclear. However, Lucas heard rumours of the incident and initiated an investigation.

In August one of Maqoma's wives, who had previously been married to a man in Toyise's chiefdom, ran away to join her original husband. When Maqoma had her brought back by force she escaped and took refuge in the Crown Reserve. On several occasions the chief applied to Lucas for a pass to pursue his fugitive spouse but was denied summarily. Maqoma exploded! Riding to Hangman's Bush, the chief, who the young magistrate described as sober, argued with Lucas over the matter and finally struck him with a sjambok. Namba and Max Kayser, Lucas's interpreter and the son of the Reverend Freiderick Kayser who had been Jongumsobomvu's missionary in the 1830's, dragged the two men apart. Immediately, the enraged Lucas, who's denials had provoked the incident, wrote to Maclean demanding that Maqoma be punished.<sup>98</sup>

The chief commissioner sent a message to the chief demanding that he report to Fort Murray and explain his actions. Ignoring the order for a few days, the Maqoma arrived before Maclean and delivered a sharp

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<sup>97</sup>(CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 18 July 1857.

<sup>98</sup>For Lucas's report of the assault see (CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 8 August 1857. It took Lucas several weeks after the incident to inform his superiors of Maqoma's requests for a pass, see (CA) BK 82, Lucas to Maclean, 25 August 1857.

reprimand:

He did not see how Maclean could suppose such a person as Macomo was still in existence, considering that he was almost dead with hunger, his money having been stopped by the government."

Maqoma continued to criticize Lucas for abusing his authority and implied that since his salary had been cut off he could once again impose stock fines on his people.<sup>100</sup> The old chief departed with a warning from Maclean. The Chief Commissioner would later claim that he "did not however deem it prudent to come into collision with Macoma's party" and that "Macoma would soon involve himself and give us more tangible grounds for dealing directly with himself".<sup>101</sup> Maqoma was still too strong for arbitrary arrest. The chief's relationship with Lucas only deteriorated when he was refused land in the Amatolas and the magistrates began dismantling the ravaged chiefdoms.

By late 1857 starvation and desertion had depopulated Maqoma's chiefdom to such an extent that the colonial officials became less cautious about silencing the recalcitrant aristocrat. Despite the warnings of his own family, Maqoma, with his wife "Nopepe" and son "Guma", rode across the colonial border in search of his fugitive spouse. He may also have been attempting to locate members of his chiefdom and bring them back to Kaffraria. At the end of August they were arrested between Fort Beaufort and Alice for being in the colony without a pass. After a summary trial in Alice the three were sentenced to one year of hard labour and by the beginning of September Maqoma was in the Grahamstown jail.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>(CA) BK 82, Conversation between Maclean and Maqoma, 31 August 1857.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>(CA) BK 82, Maclean to Shepstone, 31 August 1857. Maclean's emphasis.

<sup>102</sup>(CA) BK 82, R. Southey to Maclean, 2 September 1857. South African Commercial Advertiser 24 September 1857, while this report states that "Nopepe" and "Guma" received the same sentence as Maqoma, there is no evidence to indicate where they were incarcerated. Grahamstown Journal 5

Not surprisingly, Sandile, now entirely dependent on government support, did not protest his rival half-brother's detention.<sup>103</sup>

Fusani's murder was now publicized. Several of the men who had participated in the raid were apprehended and turned Queen's evidence in exchange for immunity from prosecution. Maqoma, along with eight of the warriors who had been involved in the Fusani raid but had refused to betray their leader, were put on trial at Fort Hare. The hearing was held on the seventeenth of November, Gawler acted as prosecutor, and none of the witnesses requested by the defendants could be located.<sup>104</sup> None of the prosecutor's witnesses, including Fusani's subjects, the two warriors who had agreed betray their chief and Gawler himself, could state that Maqoma had ordered his men to kill Fusani. Lacking council, the prisoners presented a brief defence in which all the warriors denied that Maqoma had ordered the murder and refused to admit to killing Fusani. Jongumsobomvu claimed that:

I gave no orders that Fusani should be killed. ... I have not had a chance of enquiring into the death of Fusani, because I have been detained in the colony. I sent a patrol to Fusani's kraal to make him pay, on account of the man who had been ill-used by Gawler's police... Zazeni was to sleep with the patrol, and see they did not kill him (Fusani)... I received a message from Sandilli, telling me that Fusani was doing me a great deal of harm, he was taking away my influence and that I had better take his gun away.<sup>105</sup>

Presiding over the trial, Colonel Pinckney, who had fought in the Waterkloof campaign against Jongumsobomvu and was now Magistrate of the

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September 1857.

<sup>103</sup>(CA) GH 8/50, Maclean to Grey, 10 September 1857.

<sup>104</sup>(CA) BK 82, Maclean to Colonel Pinckney, 14 November 1857.

<sup>105</sup>CCP 1/2/1/5, G4 of 1858, Proceedings and Findings of the Court Which Sat at Fort Hare on the 17th November 1857 and Sentence Pronounced by His Excellency The High Commissioner Upon Macomo and Other Kafirs Convicted of the Crime of Being Concerned in the Attack Upon and Murder of Fusani, a Paid Headman of Umhala, in the Month of July Last.

Crown Reserve, admitted that "Maqoma was quite innocent of Fusani's death" but then sentenced him to death for counselling the raiders and receiving stolen stock and goods from them. While all the prisoners were initially condemned, within a few days their sentences were commuted to twenty-one years imprisonment.<sup>106</sup> The colonial administration believed that making a martyr of Maqoma would risk stimulating further Xhosa resistance in British Kaffraria.

In late November Lucas, who had been too slow driving Maqoma's people off their land, was forced to resign. As Maqoma was escorted to Port Elizabeth for shipment to distant Robben Island, Max Kayser converted the chief's location into settler farms.<sup>107</sup> The dispossession was complete.

Previous histories of the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing, including the work of Jeff Peires, have portrayed Maqoma as a deluded believer in the prophecies who zealously slaughtered his own herds. However, this is not characteristic with his life-long commitment to independent chiefly power. Although Lewis has identified the materialist nature of the Cattle-Killing, Maqoma was not trying to regain central authority but was manipulating a popular mass movement which sought to eradicate chiefly exploitation.

When the lungsickness of 1855 began to threaten the aristocrats' system of pastoral patronage, Sir George Grey leapt at the opportunity to accelerate this process. While the governor could not have foreseen the Cattle-Killing, his aim in appointing magistrates was to emasculate the chiefs. Maqoma accepted Lucas in order to become independent from Sandile

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<sup>106</sup>For a complete account of the proceedings see Supplement to the Government Gazette, Friday, 25 December 1857.

<sup>107</sup>(CA) BK 82, Lucas to Kayser, 30 November 1857.

and persuade the government to give him some land in the Amatolas. Throughout 1855 and early 1856 Maqoma applied frantically for a location away from the epizootic. Since his herds were still intact, the chief retained control of his subjects and opposed the movement. Unfortunately, drought induced famine prompted some of Maqoma's hungry subjects to slaughter cattle for food. When lungsickness entered his chiefdom in late 1856, Maqoma could no longer rely on patronage to ensure his people's rejection of the prophets and he had no alternative but to sanction the now popular Cattle-Killing. His plan to use the movement as a lever to gain land concessions failed to impress the European authorities. As the Cattle-Killing was fulfilling Grey's dream of eliminating chiefly power, he decided to avoid colonial interference. While Maqoma's attempt to undermine the movement by stressing the ban on cultivation had some initial success, the remainder of his herds were destroyed in the chaos and violence of early 1857. Once again, starving people killed cattle for food and not in response to a millenarian message. In the wake of this apocalypse Maqoma tried to reconstruct his chiefdom and opposed colonial labour and land seizure. This was when the Europeans invented the image of Maqoma as a superstitious Cattle-Killer who had plotted to drive his starving subjects into a war with the colony.<sup>108</sup> The villainous chiefs and prophets had been responsible for the destruction of their own society. Colonial authorities simply exploited the situation. Although the chiefs' plot has been refuted, the description of Maqoma's personal role in the Cattle-Killing remains that of a committed and firm "believer". This false interpretation has dominated South African history from Theal in the 1890's to Peires in the 1980's.<sup>109</sup> Maqoma was

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<sup>108</sup>Only after the Cattle-Killing did the Grahamstown Journal publish any information on Maqoma's role in the affair. He was then linked with the mythological chiefs' plot.

<sup>109</sup>While these two historians are very different, their treatment of the Cattle-Killing does contain fundamental similarities. Theal Accepts the chiefs' plot. Peires denies it but still puts the responsibility for spreading the movement squarely in the hands of the Xhosa rulers. See

imprisoned under the pretext of being a threat to both the settlers and his own people. Nothing could have been farther from the truth. Resisting the Cattle-Killing to the very last minute, Maqoma then attempted to make the prophecies serve his own political interests. It was a reluctant slaughter. The modern Xhosa belief that Grey hid behind the reeds of the Gxarha River and whispered the prophecies into Nongqawuse's ear is an exaggeration which has its roots in reality.<sup>110</sup> Attacking chiefly power during the lungsickness crisis, the governor both stimulated and accelerated an uprising against a failed pastoral aristocracy. Maqoma responded sensibly to an internal threat brought about by a colonial induced decline of traditional political authority. Ultimately, it was Sir George Grey and his henchmen, and not chiefs like Maqoma, who were responsible for the Cattle-Killing disaster.

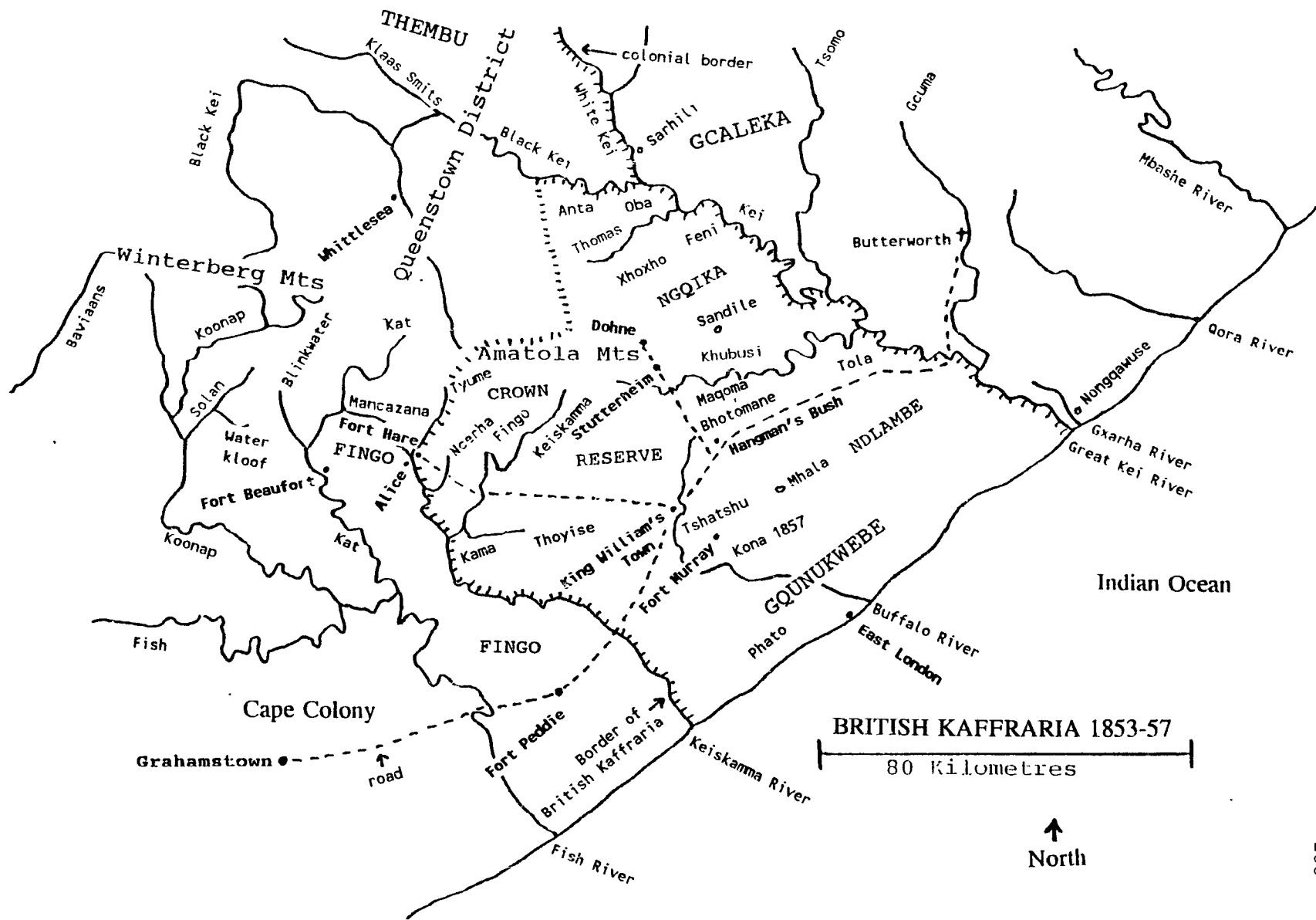
In short, pre-colonial chiefly power had been based on pastoral patronage. The destruction of this system by European conquest and the lungsickness epizootic discredited and fundamentally weakened the aristocracy. Within chiefdoms where the rulers had collaborated with the colonial invaders, enraged commoners began slaughtering royal cattle to overthrow their failed chiefs. The prohibition on cultivation was conceived by the aristocracy in the hope of undermining the movement and bringing the people to their senses. While Maqoma was reluctant to slaughter his cattle, his Great Son, Namba, joined the movement because he had less stock to lose and he wanted to ensure his future chiefly position through popular appeal. Maqoma only started to kill his cattle after the lungsickness entered his chiefdom and reserve granaries became exhausted. Utilizing the movement in an attempt to convince the government to return

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Theal, History of South Africa Vol. III, pp. 196-207; and Peires, The Dead Will Arise.

<sup>110</sup>For contemporary Xhosa opinions of the Cattle-Killing see J.B. Peires, "Suicide or Genocide? Xhosa Perceptions of the Nongqawuse Catastrophe", Radical History Review 46/7, 1990, pp. 47-57.

the Amatolas, the chief counted on rebuilding his herds with the assistance of his colonial salary. Tragically, in the violence between supporters and opponents of the Cattle-Killing, much of Maqoma's chiefdom was destroyed and he was subsequently imprisoned as an obstacle to complete colonial dispossession.





Chapter Seven  
"On the White People's Island"  
Maqoma's Banishment

Standing silently in King William's Town's Kaffrarian Museum, Wonga and I stared intently at an old photograph of the original Chief Maqoma. Thereafter, we drove east toward Transkei hoping to locate Chief Freshman Kona, great great grandson of the man in the aged, faded and browning picture. Driving for several hours we crossed the bridge at the Great Kei Drift and headed for the industrial centre of Butterworth. The long drive seemed endless. By the setting of the sun we stopped at a Butterworth petrol station and asked for directions to Gqungqe location. Graciously, the attendant instructed us to take the next right turn toward the coast. Ten kilometres along this muddy track we turned a blind corner, began fishtailing dangerously down a short but steep slope and to our horror began sliding directly toward a narrow bridge suspended across a deep ravine. In fact, it appeared far too narrow to accept a car going sideways. My life flashed before my eyes. "Let me not die in a foreign land", became my last thought. Flying over the obstacle at an oblique angle, the car impacted and stuck in a muddy knoll on the opposite side of the fearsome gap. While gripping the steering wheel, I stared at Wonga hardly believing he, far less I, had survived. The automobile had spun 180 degrees and we were now facing the bridge from the other side. It was a miracle. We had survived. After scrambling around in the mud to change a badly mangled tire, we continued cautiously down the treacherous road. As the sun dropped behind the imposing Transkeian hills, we stopped to question an old Xhosa man who was gathering his sheep. Luckily, as he reported, Gqungqe was only twenty kilometres along the next side track.

It took at least two hours to bounce down the rocky path masquerading as the road to Gqungqe. Our headlights barely pierced the

thick coastal fog which had crept in from the ocean. The area seemed deserted. Suddenly, we observed the uncharacteristic silhouette of a large square hut and thought it might be the chief's residence. Although our clothing was covered with dried mud, we knocked softly on the rough door. A young man emerged and cautiously asked who we were and what we wanted. Once it was clear that we were no threat, we were invited into a sitting room dimly lit by a flickering and sputtering lantern. As we sat on an old couch, two elderly men studied us impassively. Following lengthy minutes of awkward silence, the young man returned with his father. Immediately, Wonga leaned over and whispered "He's the one in the old picture, it's the chief." As the newcomer's face brightened in the yellow light it became obvious that he bore a striking resemblance to the original Magoma whose museum photograph we had studied. His ancestry was undeniable. Shaking hands, our host introduced himself as Chief Freshman Kona. With the chief reclining in his favourite armchair, we explained our task of collecting the stories and praises of Jongumsobomvu. Maintaining a quiet dignity, Chief Kona appeared genuinely interested and provided us with a place to sleep. The next afternoon the senior councillors would present the traditions we required.

The morning sun rose to reveal the inspiring beauty of the imposing hills which overlooked and contrasted with the deep blue of the Indian Ocean. Scattered around the location, stood small kraals of thatched-roof rondovals surrounded by thorn bush enclosures. Goats, pigs, chickens and a few magnificent long-horned cattle - unheard of in Ciskei - roamed the pastures. Smoking long pipes, women with white-painted faces wore the blankets and wide headwraps so characteristic of traditional Xhosa dress. Having always lived in urban townships, Wonga remarked "Surely this represents the old Xhosa world of my day dreams and of exciting oral traditions, of faded photographs and museum artifacts". Ruled by a man who could pass as the twin of the original Magoma, the community of

Gqungqe felt like a re-creation of an earlier century, an animated museum reconstruction which might fade should we move too abruptly or speak too loudly.

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Condemned to twenty-one years imprisonment, Maqoma, whose fifty-nine years was betrayed by the grey which besprinkled his hair, arrived in Port Elizabeth at the beginning of December 1857. Accompanying the chief was the youngest of his ten wives, thirty-five year old Katye, and their unidentified teenage son. The rebel Thembu chiefs, Quesha and Fadanna were also brought to the port after being convicted by a Queenstown court of robbery and sentenced respectively to one and seven years hard labour. Maqoma must have been pleased to see Quesha, his brother-in-law who had joined him in the Waterkloof during the campaign of 1852. Together with 150 other Xhosa prisoners, the chiefs were placed aboard the Royal Mail steamer Celt which was bound for Cape Town. For people who had never been on a ship before, the week long voyage must have been a nightmare of crashing waves and endless sea-sickness. During his time at sea Maqoma's only comfort was an occasional glass of grog which he always shared attentively with Katye.<sup>1</sup>

On the seventeenth of December the Celt arrived in Table Bay. A large crowd gathered on the quay to marvel at the famous Maqoma who stood between the mainmast and the cabin eating apricots and dressed in a simple duffel coat, fustian trousers and a battered old white hat. Despite the chains around his ankles which were as heavy as a "ship's cable", Jongumsobomvu maintained his aristocratic dignity and ignored the assembly. When asked through an interpreter what he thought of Cape Town, the old chief replied that he did not know yet but he might like it if Sir

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<sup>1</sup>The Cape Argus 5 December 1857.

George Grey received him on shore. Maqoma hoped that he would be greeted by the governor and permitted to return to his territory. However, the chief was now a powerless prisoner and the ruthless Grey had no intention of seeing him.<sup>2</sup>

Later in the day, Maqoma and his companions were escorted to the Cape Town jail where they were put in debtors cells on the upper floor. At this point the chief and Katye were separated from their son who was brought to Amsterdam Battery - a large stone fort - along with the 150 Xhosa men, women and children who all served as forced labour. On the thirtieth of December a white journalist visited the chiefs in their dark and damp goal. While Katye, Fadanna and Quesha lay listless at the entrance to the corridor, Maqoma rose to welcome their visitor. Since the prisoners were given a small supply of tobacco, Katye prepared a pipe for her husband and the group sat in a circle smoking while Jongumsobomvu spoke to the reporter through an interpreter. In vivid detail the Jingqi chief told the story of his life and expressed grievances over the seizure of his land. Finally, Maqoma said that he wanted to discuss this matter with the governor but was greatly disappointed that Grey had not yet seen him. As the journalist began to leave, Katye asked him for some fat with which to grease her body and the Thembu chiefs requested a daily cup of wine which was a privilege only Maqoma and his wife had been permitted.<sup>3</sup>

Although preparations for the chiefs on Robben Island were not completed, the escape of forty-six Xhosa men from Amsterdam Battery in early February 1858 made officials eager to isolate Maqoma and his fellow royal prisoners. Their continued presence in Cape Town would only serve

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 19 December 1857. Also see Janet Hodgson, "Xhosa Chiefs in Cape Town in the Mid-19th Century", Studies in the History of Cape Town Vol 2 (1984), pp. 41-49.

<sup>3</sup>The Cape Argus 30 December 1857.

to encourage resistance. In the middle of March Jongumsobomvu, who Grey had totally ignored, and his companions were shipped to the notorious island. At this time the former Jingqi ruler was reunited with Xhoxho, Mhala, Stokwe, Delima and several other minor chiefs who had been convicted of various offenses during the post cattle-killing dispossession and sent into exile. Nine miles away from Cape Town, the barren, windswept island had been employed as a place of banishment since the seventeenth century. Up to the late twentieth century resisters to white rule in South Africa had been sent to Robben Island where they were literally out of sight and out of mind. Nxele, the Xhosa religious leader who had led Ndlambe's attack on Grahamstown in 1819, had drowned there in 1820 while attempting to steal a boat for an escape. Siyolo, the chief who had stalked the Fish River Bush during "the War of Mlanjeni", and his wife had been living on the island since 1853 amusing themselves by tending a small herd of goats.<sup>4</sup>

Magoma and the other chiefs were settled at isolated Murray's Bay, the site of Nxele's death, which was several miles from the main community of prisoners and paupers, lunatics and lepers. Since the prison officials had not been ready for the chiefs' arrival, they were initially housed in a single shack with an extremely leaky roof. Their thin, worn mattresses were little insulation from the cold ground and frayed blankets failed to shield them from the biting wind and rain. After six months the island administrators authorized the construction of three round huts made of thin wooden sticks covered with canvas. This was a partial improvement. Conversely, the three white guards and an insane clerk who had been assigned to supervise the chiefs, lived in the comparative comfort of an

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<sup>4</sup>For Amsterdam Battery see (CA) CO 715, Superintendent of Kafirs to Colonial Secretary, 5 February 1858. For Magoma's transport see The Cape Argus 17 March 1857. For a history of the island see S. de Villiers, Robben Island (Cape Town, 1971).

old whaling station.<sup>5</sup>

For a chief who been politically active since 1818 and had fought in three wars against the Europeans, Maqoma's life on Robben Island seemed numbingly boring and hopeless aimless. Although prison records indicate that the chiefs were relatively well fed with a constant supply of meat, bread, rice, tea, sugar and salt, there was very little to do except sit around and smoke the monthly allowance of tobacco. Alcohol was forbidden. One of the low ranking Xhosa prisoners attempted suicide by cutting his own throat. According to Quesha, "The only thing that made the heart burn, was a desire to see our own country and people." Determined to lift his companions from their despondency, Maqoma asked permission for the chiefs to roam the island hunting small game but was denied on the basis that they might attempt to escape. Eventually, after assurances from the royal convicts that they were "not so foolish as Nxele", the decision was reversed and Jongumsobomvu led the others in daily hunts for hares and pheasants in which he was always the most successful. In the fashion of young Xhosa boys, the chiefs employed small throwing sticks to bag their quarry. It was a pleasant diversion. However, at night the exiles would return to their camp and sit in the dark candle-light of their huts pining "for our wives and children."<sup>6</sup>

Maqoma did not give up. The chief sent repeated messages to the governor requesting an audience in which he could voice his grievances and ask to be sent home. Unfortunately, Grey continued to ignore these

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<sup>5</sup>For the accommodations see (CA) 715, Dr. Minto to Bayers, 19 February 1858 and Civil Engineer's Office to Superintendent of Kaffirs, 11 August 1858. For the mattresses see (CA) CO 724, Minto to Piers, 12 April 1858. (CA) E3181 is a faded photograph of the Murray's Bay settlement shortly after the completion of the huts.

<sup>6</sup>For the attempted suicide see (CA) CO 724, Diary of the Surgeon Superintendent of Robben Island, Dr. Minto, 14 March 1858. The account of Maqoma's hunting comes from Quesha's statements in "Return of Quesha", The Queenstown Free Press 9 February 1859.

appeals and by the first of November 1858 Jongumsobomvu felt so frustrated that he personally accused Dr. Minto, the island's surgeon superintendent, of being "the cause of his detention." Contributing to the chief's outburst, Katye had been seriously ill for ten days and had refused medicine saying "No, my heart is sore, I want to die." Minto reported Maqoma's complaint to the governor's office and in two weeks a message arrived for the chief which stated that if Grey had anything to communicate to him it would come through a "proper officer" and warning the chief to restrain his anger.<sup>7</sup>

Once Katye had recovered, Maqoma encouraged her to request permission to visit Cape Town. Siyolo's wife, Nonesi, had done this before and had secretly sent messages to relatives in British Kaffraria. Since the wives were not actually prisoners, Grey's office gave its approval. In early 1859 Katye and Nonesi began the first in a series of periodic trips to Cape Town where they developed a covert communication network with their homeland. However, within a year the colonial administration discovered that the wives had been employing Xhosa women in Cape Town's pauper's lodge to convey messages from Maqoma to his former subjects in British Kaffraria "which were construed by the authorities into something like treason or sedition" and the visits were abruptly stopped. Both Siyolo and Maqoma avoided further punishment by blaming each other's wives for initiating the communications without permission."

In 1859 a party of unidentified sportsmen, probably army officers and government officials, visited Robben Island to shoot pheasant. Pitching their tent close to Murray's Bay, the hunters were soon visited

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<sup>7</sup>(CA) CO 724, Minto to Colonial Secretary in Cape Town, 1 November 1858 and Minto's note, 15 November 1858.

<sup>8</sup>For the visits see (CA) CO, Minto to Colonial Secretary in Cape Town, 30 December 1858. For the covert messages see "A Visit to Robben Island", Cape Monthly Magazine VI, 1859, p. 191.

by Magoma and Katye who had known some of them from many years before. The old chief, now over sixty, carried on a conversation with the visitors in broken English, Dutch and Xhosa with "all the indications of the intellectual vigour which once so eminently distinguished him, and his criticisms on some of our governors and frontier administrations... were marked with great shrewdness and sagacity." Upon Jongumsobomvu's invitation, the party walked to the chiefs' camp where they observed that the constables treated the prisoners with kindness but maintained a strict surveillance over their movements. Inside one of the huts the chiefs and sportsmen squatted around a small fire as Katye prepared a meal. With Delima translating, each prisoner related his grievances and beseeched the visitors to address the government on their behalf. Magoma related the story of how Katye's trips to Cape Town had been cancelled. Mhala pined bitterly for one of his wives who had refused to accompany him to Robben Island. While Quesha had been released some months before, Fadanna said he was satisfied with what Magoma had expressed. Xhoxho stated pathetically that he "was wifeless, childless and friendless" and then asked for the comfort of a drink of brandy. Although Delima claimed that he was innocent of horse-stealing, the few younger chiefs were unwilling to speak in the presence of their elders. As the day came to an end, the hunters returned to their camp leaving their hosts in an extremely melancholy state. The visitors later claimed that the chiefs enjoyed "abundant rations", however, a group photograph of the prisoners gathered outside one of the huts revealed that they all shared a distressingly thin, almost wraith-like appearance.<sup>9</sup>

In September 1860 Sandile along with the Reverend Tiyo Soga who was the first ordained Xhosa minister, and Charles Brownlee arrived in Cape Town by ship to participate in the royal visit of Prince Alfred to the Cape Colony. Remembering his treacherous imprisonment in 1847, the Ngqika

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 191-192. The photograph was published with this article.



paramount was worried that Grey would use this opportunity to banish him to Robben Island. In turn, the nervous Sandile visited the children and grandchildren of the Xhosa chiefs who had been sent to Cape Town's Zonnebloem College following the cattle-killing but made no public inquiries about Magoma or the other prisoners. The paramount's own son and daughter, Edmund and Emma, were hostages at the school. Shortly before the visit, a white teacher at Zonnebloem overheard a Zulu student tell a friend that "It was a regular custom of the English to catch great potentates who were their enemies, and shut them up in islands - Napoleon in St. Helena, Magoma on Robben Island." With great relief, Sandile was shipped back to British Kaffraria. The next month, Jongumsobomvu's young grandson, George Mandyali Magoma, who had been sent to Britain for education, wrote a long letter to Sir George Grey asking "Please Sir to tell me if you have seen my Grandfather since you being there, how is he now or how does he get on - I am looking to hear from you about him, I shall be very much pleased to hear of him". At this time two other grandsons of Magoma, Edward Dumisweni and Archibald, were enrolled at Zonnebloem.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout the early 1860's Katye and Nonesi made repeated requests to resume visits to Cape Town. Ultimately, Dr. Minto supported their petition and in February 1862 the new governor, Sir Philip Wodehouse, once again allowed the two women to make periodic trips to the mainland on the rigid condition that they refrain from visiting the Xhosa students at

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<sup>10</sup>For the visit of Sandile and children at Zonnebloem see Janet Hodgson, Princess Emma (Cape Town, 1987), pp. 76-83. For the Zulu student see A.E.M. Anderson-Morsehead, A Pioneer and a Founder: Reminiscences of Some Who Knew Robert Gray D.D. First Bishop of Cape Town (Cape Town, 1905), p. 129. For George Magoma see (SAL) Grey Collection, Additional File of African Letters, G.M. Magoma to Sir George Grey, 1 October 1860. For Magoma's other grandsons see Hodgson, "Xhosa Chiefs in Cape Town", p.66. It is impossible to determine which of Magoma's sons were the fathers of these boys. Since they all died without offspring, oral tradition has forgotten them.

Zonnebloem College.<sup>11</sup>

When Dr. W. Edwards replaced Minto as the surgeon superintendent of Robben Island, less attention was paid to the applications of Maqoma and the other chiefs. Although Edwards began his term in 1863 by issuing the chiefs with seven great-coats which they had requested since it was an extremely cold journey to pick up their rations at the village, the new surgeon quickly became disinterested in the isolated prisoners at Murray's Bay. Later that same year Governor Wodehouse sent the chiefs four cows which under the harsh conditions on the island, failed to give milk and were all dead within two years. No other concessions were forthcoming. From 1864 to 1869 there was not one mention of Maqoma or the other chiefs in any of the institution's correspondence.<sup>12</sup> They had been completely forgotten.

During the late 1860's the Xhosa students at Zonnebloem became increasingly agitated about the plight of their chiefs on Robben island. In 1867 only Maqoma and Katye, Siyolo and Nonesi, and the lonely Xhoxho had not been released and a young Xhosa boy wrote an essay which was subsequently published in a missionary periodical. According to the author:

Our great general, Makomo, went to Grahams-town, because he thought the English would make peace with him; but the English accused him of killing some of their men, and that was done in fighting; but they saw that he was a brave and clever man. I consider him that he was as brave as Napoleon or Duke of Wellington.<sup>13</sup>

Clearly, the Zonnebloem students were just beginning to realize that

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<sup>11</sup>(CA) GH 31/1, Travers to Minto, 8 February 1862.

<sup>12</sup>For the coats and cows see (CA) CO 814, Edwards to Colonial Secretary, 18 June and 5 December 1863. For the absence of information on the chiefs see (CA) CO 827 to 910.

<sup>13</sup>Essay on "Africa" in The Net, 1 May 1867, p. 78.

literacy could provide an opportunity to publicize their points of view. Later in the same year nearly all the Xhosa pupils in Cape Town sent a letter to Bishop Robert Gray, who had previously written letters to Wodehouse asking that the chiefs be freed, praying that he would convince the governor to liberate Jongumsobomvu and the others. However, as British Kaffraria had been annexed to the Cape Colony the year before and African territory reduced to make way for more white farms, Wodehouse, although predisposed to release the chiefs for humanitarian reasons, still believed "that Maqoma's name would be wildfire among the tribes."<sup>14</sup>

In April 1869 Wodehouse returned from a tour of the Eastern Cape and ordered the chiefs to be emancipated. Historians have been confused over the reasons for this sudden liberation. Peires offers no explanation and Hodgson claims that Wodehouse finally thought that the Xhosa would offer no more resistance to European supremacy. However, the Cape Town press suggested that the liberation was designed to stabilize deteriorating colonial relations with Sarhili's Gcaleka. Since Delima, who was the only chief fluent in English, had been liberated four years before, throughout the late 1860's the remaining prisoners had grown old in complete isolation. Wodehouse ordered that upon the return of the three chiefs to the frontier each was to be granted a small tract of land in the recently conquered Transkeian territory.<sup>15</sup> While Maqoma, Katye and Xhoxho had served eleven years on Robben Island, Siyolo and his wife had been there for sixteen.

Upon landing in Cape Town on Monday the nineteenth of April, the exiled chiefs were invited to dinner by Mr. Glover, the Warden of

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<sup>14</sup>Hodgson, "Xhosa Chiefs in Cape Town", p. 64-65. Also see "Kafir Chiefs on Robben Island", The Net, 1 June 1867.

<sup>15</sup>For Peires see The Dead Will Arise, p. 302 and for Hodgson see "Xhosa Chiefs in Cape Town", pp. 65-66. For the press see The Cape Argus 22 April 1869.

Zonnebloem College. Insulted by the invitation which had ignored Katye and Nonesi, Maqoma replied, "the chiefs and their wives have much pleasure in accepting the kind invitation." Arriving late, the chiefs wore new European suits and stylish top hats which they had been given by the colonial government. When the warden asked the seventy-one year old Jongumsobomvu if he had any plans for the future, he announced "On that point Maqoma has his own ideas." After dinner the chiefs and their wives sat in Glover's drawing-room, conversing through the interpretation of some Xhosa students and looking at pictures. Maqoma was disappointed that none of his grandsons were still at the college. George and Edward had both died of tuberculosis and Archibald had been sent home suffering from the same illness. However, the elderly Jingqi chief was presented with his daughter, Matilda Maqoma, who had been residing at a Cape Town orphanage. Immediately, Jongumsobomvu demanded that she accompany him home to British Kaffraria and despite Matilda's desire to stay, Glover conceded on the condition that she was not to be sold for cattle.<sup>16</sup> Within a few weeks the former prisoners were on a steamer bound for East London.

By the end of September 1869 Maqoma had returned to find his chiefdom in ruins. His former location between the road to the Great Kei Drift and the Kubusi River, was now occupied by fenced off white farms as were the coastal territories of the Ndlambe and Gqunukhwebe. Sandile and his few remaining followers inhabited the land north of the Kubusi while Anta still controlled the Thomas River. Fingoized Xhosa clustered around mission stations in the Amatola Crown Reserve which had been taken from the Ngqika chiefs in 1853. Significantly, in the wake of the Cattle-Killing the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police had crossed the Kei and driven the starving Gcaleka east of the Mbashe River into the Bomvana area. Thousands of Fingoes were settled in Sarhili's old territory and

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<sup>16</sup>Anderson-Morshead, A Pioneer and a Founder, pp. 130-131.

only in 1865 were the Gcaleka permitted to reoccupy a tiny coastal strip of their former homeland. The 1867 discovery of diamonds in Griqualand West had given renewed vigour to colonial expansionism and it seemed only a matter of time before all African chiefdoms would be subdued and dispossessed.

Maqoma's sons had been scattered. Because of Kona's cooperation with the colonial authorities during the Cattle-Killing, in 1858 he and a handful of followers were sent to live under the supervision of the Christian chief Dyani Tshatshu near King William's Town. By 1863 Maqoma's oldest and right-hand son ruled 127 subjects - twenty-eight men, thirty-one women and sixty-eight children - with a total herd of thirty-one cattle and sixty-one goats. After the annexation of British Kaffraria Kona and his subjects, including three other unidentified sons of Maqoma, were transferred to Sandile's Ngqika District. Many more chiefless Jingqi were moved to the Ncerha River near Fort Hare within the Crown Reserve where they placed under paid headmen and became migrant workers for European farmers in the colony. They were becoming Fingoized. Namba, Jongumsobomvu's younger great-son, was settled within the pro-colonial chiefdom of Thoyise a few kilometres north of the Kubusi. When Namba had requested his own land near the Jingqi in the Crown Reserve, the colonial officials thought it would be dangerous to give these people a traditional leader. In 1860 this son, who had no followers except his immediate family, had received a small plot of land on the Kubusi near the town of Stutterheim on the stipulation that he was not to use it to rally members of his former chiefdom. Tragically, two years later Namba had contracted an undetermined illness and died in Anta's Thomas River location. Still hostile to the Maqomas, Sandile did not attend his funeral. Makrexana, Jongumsobomvu's son who had been raised by Charles Stretch in the 1830's and 40's, had gone to work somewhere in the colony but maintained communication with Kona. Tini, a very minor son, had moved to the Fort

Beaufort area after the Cattle-Killing to become a tenant-farmer and by the very early 1870's he purchased two sizable farms which became a haven for dispersed Xhosa people.<sup>17</sup> With his chiefdom destroyed, in 1869 old Maqoma must have been depressed and despondent. Everything he had fought for appeared to be gone.

Wodehouse's promise of land in the Transkeian territory, or anywhere for that matter, never materialized. Colonial officials forbade Maqoma to leave the immediate vicinity of Sandile's location or summon any of his former followers.<sup>18</sup> Ignored by his younger, yet superior half-brother and without any subjects save his aging wives, Jongumsobomvu must have felt like a useless and pitiful old man. The chief's mother and confidant, Nothonto, had died years before during his banishment as had many of his trusted councillors and friends. Everyday he would gaze beyond the distant Amatola Mountains and brood bitterly about his stolen land in the Kat River Valley.

A few months after arriving in Sandile's area, Maqoma applied to the Ngqika commissioner, Liefeldt, for a pass to visit a sick daughter at the Peelton mission. The chief received permission and stayed at the station for two months. When the pass expired and Jongumsobomvu did not return to the Ngqika District, Liefeldt discovered that the old chief had quietly received an extension from the Resident Magistrate Griffiths at

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<sup>17</sup>For Kona see (CA) 1/TAM 8/24, Return of Tzatzoe's Location for Kona and Botman, 1863; and (CA) 1/KWT 5/1/2/2, Liefeldt to Magistrate of King William's Town, 8 September 1871. For Jingqi in the Crown Reserve see (CA) 1/TAM 9/1, Ayliff to Maclean, 6 June 1859. For Namba see (CA) 1/TAM 9/1, Ayliff to Maclean, 16 June 1859 and 18 January 1860; and (SAL) Grey Collection, Additional File of African Letters, Namba to Sir George Grey, 9 May 1859. For Namba's death see Donovan Williams, (Ed.), The Journal and Selected Writings of the Reverend Tiyo Soga (Cape Town, 1983), pp. 153-160. For Makrexana see (CA) 1/TAM 9/1, Fielding to Ross, 20 March 1860. For Tini see (CA) 1/TAM 9/1, Ayliff to Strongfellow, 10 December 1858.

<sup>18</sup>(CA) 1/KWT 5/1/2/2, Liefeldt to Magistrate of King William's Town, 27 September 1869.

King William's Town. Three months later, around May 1870, Liefeldt learned that Maqoma was on the Upper Kubusi Crown Reserve gathering followers and causing alarm among neighbouring settlers. Complaining to Griffiths that he had not received the land which the governor had promised, Jongumsobomvu was granted permission to live on a small plot just outside the Ngqika District which had been previously given to Kona. Liefeldt was outraged with Griffiths as Maqoma was now twenty miles from his appointed location and was collecting a government salary of twenty-four pounds per annum to administer his small but growing community.<sup>19</sup>

By late August 1871 Maqoma, now seventy-three years old, obtained a pass to go to the Fort Beaufort area where he claimed to have arranged to rent the farm of Charles Blakeway who was away working on the diamond fields. This plot of land was located on the Kroome River and extremely close to the forested ravines of Mtontsi/Waterkloof where Jongumsobomvu had eluded the British during the war of 1850-53. On Saturday the twenty-sixth of August Maqoma, along with seventy followers, 140 head of cattle, 100 sheep and goats, a dozen horses and several wagons, arrived at Tini's location just two miles from Fort Beaufort on the road to the town of Alice.

Rumours that the elderly chief intended to reoccupy his haunts in the Waterkloof alarmed local settlers and on Monday the twenty-eighth the magistrate of Fort Beaufort, Mr. L. Meurant, sent a message to Tini's farm demanding that Maqoma report to the town courthouse. When Jongumsobomvu presented himself the magistrate discovered that he did indeed have a pass to travel to the area but that it was only valid for one more week and covered only five travelling companions. Maqoma then explained that he had met Blakeway some months before to arrange the rental and stated

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<sup>19</sup>(CA) 1/KWT 5/1/2/2, Liefeldt to Magistrate of King William's Town, 8 September 1871.

firmly that he would not return to the Ngqika District. The chief also claimed that upon his release from Robben Island he had been promised a tract of land which had not yet been forthcoming. Responding to Meurant's observation that the pass did not mention any cattle, Jongumsobomvu claimed that although he could not read the document, Liefeldt had said it included all his stock. Since the magistrate would not permit the chief and his entourage to travel to the Kroome, Magoma agreed to wait until instructions were sent from the governor in Cape Town. Jongumsobomvu did not realize that the introduction of the telegraph had considerably increased the speed of colonial communication. Additionally, Blakeway's relatives claimed that he had made no arrangement for Magoma to live on his farm.

According to Xhosa who were informers for the police, Jongumsobomvu returned to Tini's location where a considerable number of Xhosa, their faces painted red in the traditional fashion, had assembled. Many were dissatisfied servants and workers from Fort Beaufort and surrounding white farms. That night a great meeting was held. Addressing the crowd, Magoma announced that all the land from Fort Beaufort to the Koonap River along the Kroome was his and that he would remain in the area until all the Boers and Fingoes were forced to leave. Several young men raised the possibility of fighting but Jongumsobomvu wisely discouraged the idea. If this event was a creation of colonial propaganda aimed at discrediting the aged chief, then it is likely that his rejection of violence would have not been included.

Over the next few days, as the magistrate waited for the governor's instructions, eighty officers of the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police arrived in Fort Beaufort. On Thursday the thirty-first of August, a telegram arrived from Cape Town denying the old chief permission to settle in the vicinity. Once again, Magoma was summoned to the courthouse where



Meurant coolly and diplomatically apologized for any misunderstanding concerning the pass and ordered the old chief to drive his cattle and followers back to the Ngqika District. Observing the increased police presence, Jongumsobomvu meekly agreed to return adding pathetically, "I am sick and my cattle are poor."<sup>20</sup>

The following morning Maqoma led his followers and stock back to King William's Town. Resting at the Debe Nek, Jongumsobomvu was visited by Kama, the Christian Gqunukhwebe chief who had married his sister Nongwane in the 1820's, who warned him to obey the government and "not make a fool of himself". At King William's Town the chief was interviewed by several colonial officials including the commander of the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police. Accused of betraying the confidence of his rulers and warned not to repeat the incident, Jongumsobomvu "promised not to trouble the people of Fort Beaufort again" and returned to his home on the Kubusi. At this time the colonial press criticised the Fort Beaufort settlers for exaggerating the threat posed by Maqoma's movements and claimed that all the excitement had only added to his popularity among the Xhosa.<sup>21</sup>

Maqoma stayed in the Ngqika District for two months. In late November he approached Liefeldt at the Tembani residency and obtained a pass to visit King William's Town for four days. However, the chief, without any followers or stock, secretly made his way back to the vicinity of Blakeway's farm near the Waterkloof. Hearing rumours that

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<sup>20</sup>These four paragraphs are based on The Cape Argus 31 August and 9 September 1871, and "Macomo's Attempt to Recover His Old Haunts at Fort Beaufort", The Kaffrarian Watchman 4 September 1871. See also The Standard and Mail 19 September 1871.

<sup>21</sup>Cape Argus 12 September 1871. Interestingly, the fact that Kama had warned Maqoma about further resistance was published in the colonial press and is also part of an oral tradition related by Mr. W. Gqirhana. For the press's opinion see The Standard and Mail 12 and 14 September 1871.

Jongumsobomvu had returned, Meurant directed his clerk, Walter Piers, to hire two Xhosa informants to determine the old chief's location. A few days later, on the afternoon of the twenty-sixth of November, Maqoma was seen briefly on the streets of Fort Beaufort but had disappeared before the magistrate could react. Later the same day the informants returned to Meurant and reported that Jongumsobomvu was being sheltered by some Xhosa workers on Blakeway's farm. That night a heavily armed police detachment under Sergeant Pearce rode to the farm and by midnight they had surrounded the huts. With revolvers and repeating rifles aimed at the dwellings, the sergeant shouted that everyone inside was to come out one by one. A handful of surprised Xhosa surrendered but the chief was not among them. After Pearce bellowed angrily that if Maqoma did not come out the detachment would open fire, the old aristocrat exited one of the dwellings. Since Jongumsobomvu could not produce the necessary pass, he was arrested and incarcerated in the Fort Beaufort jail.

The next morning Maqoma was interrogated by Meurant. The chief showed his four-day pass to King William's Town and claimed to have lost another which he had acquired from that community's magistrate permitting him to travel to Fort Beaufort. Immediately, Meurant sent a telegram to King William's Town asking for verification of Jongumsobomvu's story and received a prompt reply that the chief had not been there. Amazed by the speed of this communication, Maqoma admitted to his lie and asked Meurant if he would let him proceed without a pass. Meurant explained that he would have to detain the chief in gaol until instructions were received from the governor, Sir Henry Barkley. When Jongumsobomvu complained about having to sleep in a cell, Meurant stated that he had "brought the troubles on himself".<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>These two paragraphs are based on The Kaffrarian Watchman 27 November 1871. For the self-serving account of Peirs in which he claimed to be the leading figure in the arrest see Berning, Conversations of Sir George Cory, pp. 74-75. It is not surprising that missionary dominated Xhosa language press published an account nearly identical to the settler

Within a week Barkley had ordered Maqoma to be returned to Robben Island. Fearing armed resistance from the Xhosa of Tini's location, Meurant and the police escorted Jongumsobomvu out of Fort Beaufort disguised as the town drunk. On Saturday the second of December "a score of Mounted Police, armed to the teeth", brought Maqoma to the Grahamstown jail. The next day a large crowd of settlers had gathered outside the building where twenty-seven police had assembled to escort the chief to Port Elizabeth. Upon leaving the gaol and mounting a white horse, Maqoma's "face and eyes appeared to glisten with excitement; but a moment had hardly elapsed before the tear drops had started in his eyes." Suddenly, the chief realized that this was the last time he would ever see his homeland. Maintaining his royal dignity and an inscrutable countenance, Jongumsobomvu did not offer any farewell to the few Xhosa who were within the crowd but rather rode out of town with the police.<sup>23</sup>

The next day Maqoma entered Port Elizabeth and was placed on board the Roman, a steamer bound for Cape Town. By the second week of December the old chief arrived at Table Bay where he was shipped immediately to Robben Island on the Gnu. Approving of this rebanishment, the colonial press stated that Maqoma had violated his parole - the conditions of which had never been stipulated - and published letters from eastern Cape settlers praising the actions of Meurant.<sup>24</sup> Conversely, many Xhosa employed around Fort Beaufort demonstrated their disapproval by abandoning work and moving to the Ngqika District. Although Sandile initially responded to the news of his rival half-brother's departure by saying that

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version, see "U-Maqoma Etolongweni Yase Beaufort", Isiqidimi SamaXosa 1 December 1871.

<sup>23</sup>"The Chief Macomo", The Kaffrarian Watchman 4 December 1871.

<sup>24</sup>The Standard and Mail 2, 5, 7, and 9 December 1871. For a letter praising Meurant see Ibid., 6 February 1872.

"Macomo had been fool enough to fall into the hands of the British Government", the paramount soon changed his tune. Observing that the exiled Maqoma was becoming increasingly popular among the young Ngqika, in February 1872 Sandile asked Liefeldt what crime the old chief had committed and where he had been tried? After the magistrate claimed that Jongumsobomvu had violated the conditions of his release, Sandile said that these restrictions were not known and requested that "His Excellency formally consider their appeal and graciously allow the old chief to be returned that he might peaceably end his days among the children of his tribe." As the Colonial Office in London had approved the governor's decision, the petition was denied.<sup>25</sup>

Several months later the Cape Parliament discussed Maqoma's case. The member for King William's Town, Mr. Gould, naively asked whether or not Maqoma was subject to British law and if he had received a trial. Responding, the Colonial Secretary said he did not know if the chief was a British subject but he had been sent back to Robben Island for violating the "good conduct" condition of his parole. Another member inspired loud cheers by yelling "That is just where he ought to be!" When the members were informed that Governor Barkley had rejected Sandile's plea for Jongumsobomvu's freedom, they acknowledged with a hearty laugh.<sup>26</sup>

On Robben Island Maqoma discovered that his huts and Siyolo's goats were long gone. Living in the pauper ward, the venerable chief longed for Katyi's companionship. Since Jongumsobomvu was the only Xhosa person on the island and had never learned much English or Dutch, he could not

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<sup>25</sup>For the Xhosa leaving Fort Beaufort see Cape Argus 7 December 1871. For Sandile see Ibid., 16 January 1872, and (CA) 1/KWT 5/1/2/2, Liefeldt to Brownlee, 19 February 1872. For London's approval see (CA) GH 23/31, Sir Henry Barley to Earl of Kimberley, 2 December 1871, and (CA) GH 1/336, Kimberley from London to Barkley, 15 January 1871.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 9 May 1872.

communicate very well with the administrators or other inmates. Despite these conditions the commander of the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police, a member of the Bowker family, urged the government to continue the old chief's imprisonment.<sup>27</sup> Prison documents suggest that after eighteen months of total isolation, the seventy-five year old Maqoma began to deteriorate. On the ninth of September 1873 the chief, according to the institution's Anglican chaplain, died "of old age and dejection, at being here alone - no wife, or child, or attendant." The surgeon wrote a brief note that Jongumsobomvu's "cause of death was natural decay." Ironically, several days before passing away the half-conscious chief, who had spent most of his life resisting colonial intrusion into Xhosa society, was baptised against his will.<sup>28</sup> Not satisfied with stealing Maqoma's land, people and cattle, the Europeans also wanted his soul. It was a tragic end. The once powerful chief was buried in an unmarked pauper's grave and Xhosa praise-singers began to refer to him as "the one who died on the white people's island".<sup>29</sup>

Xhosa oral tradition contradicts the colonial version of Maqoma's death. It is said that Jongumsobomvu was murdered on Robben Island by either white or Fingo prison guards. The most colourful tale claims that the chief's favourite bull, Jingqi, swam from Ciskei to Robben Island - a distance of over 1000 kilometres - where he attempted to rescue his master. However, as Maqoma was riding Jingqi into the surf, they were both shot to death. Although informants swear to have known this story for many generations, it definitely gained greater credibility after Lent Maqoma, a modern Ciskeian cabinet minister, had a traditional seer find

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<sup>27</sup>For the conditions see "U-Maqoma", Isiqidimi SamaXosa 1 January 1872. For the police commander see Cape Argus 3 June 1873.

<sup>28</sup>(UW) AB 1161 G2, Anglican Church Records, Journal of the Padre on Robben Island, August and September 1873. (CA) CO 972, Surgeon Superintendent to Colonial Secretary, 10 September 1873.

<sup>29</sup>Rubusana, Zemk'iinkomo, p. 257.

Jongumsobomvu's grave where a shoulder blade , which had been pierced by a bullet, was unearthed. Every informant refers to the bullet-hole as evidence of this tale's accuracy.<sup>30</sup> The appearance of the chief's favourite bull in this tradition is an obvious indication of symbolism. The image of Jingqi represents the loneliness Maqoma must have been experiencing as the only Xhosa prisoner left on the island. The bull symbolizes both the spirit of the destroyed chiefdom calling its ruler and that Maqoma's demise also meant the final death of his community which had been named after the animal. However, while prison officials recorded in detail the causes of death for all convicts, lepers and paupers on the island, Jongumsobomvu's specific affliction remains a mystery and the references to him are vague and fleeting. Maqoma's tendency to resist is well known and it is possible he was killed during a confrontation with prison officials or guards. Was there a cover up? It seems possible. Neither can it be dismissed that Lent and his supporters currently seek to increase their prestige by elevating Maqoma to the status of martyr.

Although Maqoma's obituaries in the settler press generally praised his martial career, they also approved of his imprisonment. "The late Kafir chief was gifted with an intelligence much beyond that of his fellows. He was bold and crafty in war, and at no time could be trusted." Furthermore, the same journalist also claimed that "In self-defence, and to save the lives of his own people, the government was compelled to secure the person of Macoma."<sup>31</sup> William Bowker, a prominent settler, wrote that Jongumsobomvu had "immortalised himself in colonial history, humbug, murder and rapine being roads to fame. All will own that he was an energetic savage of extraordinary ability and a commander of savages

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<sup>30</sup>Interviews with Mrs. S.C. Maqoma and Chief L.W. Maqoma.

<sup>31</sup>Cape Argus 13 September 1873. Also see The Kaffrarian Watchman 22 September 1873.

second to none".<sup>32</sup> The mission-dominated Xhosa press published a completely neutral summary of Maqoma's life.<sup>33</sup> However, one anonymous letter, reminiscent of the sympathetic writings of John Philip, John Ross, James Read and Charles Lennox Stretch, appeared in a leading Cape Town newspaper and sarcastically attacked those who had scorned the Jingqi chief:

The death of Maqoma deserves passing notice...  
 Serve him right Jaa, and is, the general verdict.  
 Why should the old chief covet land because it  
 belonged to his fathers? What business has a black  
 man to conspire for and fight for his ancient  
 birthright and inheritance? It would be patriotic  
 in an Englishman; but then the Anglo-Saxon race  
 has a monopoly on patriotism, and it is unpardonable  
 for a mere kafir to pretend he loves his country.  
 Robben Island, imprisonment and death were too good  
 for the rogue. So far public opinion. Those, however,  
 who were present when Macoma took, from the Upper  
 Koonap Heights, his last look of the Waterkloof, the  
 Hogsback, the Tyumie Valley, and the glorious range  
 of the Amatolas - hills and dales unsurpassed in  
 beauty or grandeur, and where his fathers had roamed  
 at large, long ere the days of the paternal govern-  
 ment - those, I say, who saw Macoma's features on that  
 occasion, his convulsed expression, his stern silence,  
 the few unbidden tears that would force their way down  
 his rugged black face, discovered then, and have never  
 since forgotten, that true amor patria is of no creed,  
 clime or colour, but dwells deep in the heart alike of  
 black and white.<sup>34</sup>

The Xhosa would fight once more. In August 1877 a skirmish between the Fingoes and Gcaleka of Transkei resulted in colonial retaliation against the latter. After retreating east over the Mbashe River, Sarhili and his subjects regrouped and in November counterattacked the European/Fingo army which was occupying their homeland. At this time a patrol of colonial police entered the Ngqika District to disarm a suspected rebel. Sandile was furious but refused Sarhili's requests to join in the revolt. However, Sandile's son, Matanzima, and Khiva,

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<sup>32</sup>The Standard and Mail 11 November 1873.

<sup>33</sup>"Ukububa Kuka Maqoma", Isigidimi SamaXosa 1 October 1873.

<sup>34</sup>Cape Argus 25 September 1873.

Sarhili's war-leader, led some young Ngqika warriors against a Fingo community and ambushed a party of colonial police. War had been forced on the indecisive Sandile and many of his subjects defied the government by moving into the Amatola Crown Reserve. On the last day of December Sandile's new magistrate, W. Wright, ordered all "loyal" Ngqika to gather around the Mgwali mission. Simultaneously, the Europeans prepared to crush all Xhosa resistance.<sup>35</sup>

In January 1878 Kona and his followers reported to the Mgwali station and promised not to join the rebels. Maqoma's great son had fought in every European-Xhosa conflict since 1834 and realized the utter futility of military resistance. Kona would no longer allow his people to starve for a lost cause and thought that remaining "loyal" might prevent further dispossession of his chiefdom. Although Anta, Sandile's half-brother who had refused to sanction the Cattle-Killing, had died just before the war, his people joined Kona at the mission. Tyhala, Sandile's peace-loving councillor, and Feni and Oba, sons of the long dead Tyali, also submitted to the colonials. There were over 2000 Xhosa at Mgwali.<sup>36</sup>

In early December 1877 the settlers of Fort Beaufort had become fearful that Tini Maqoma and his subjects would ally with the Ngqika rebels and flee to the Waterkloof to conduct a guerrilla campaign. Although Tini had no intention of repeating his father's actions from the 1850's, he became concerned about arbitrary arrest and always travelled with an escort of 200 warriors. Police patrols around Tini's location increased and many settlers fled the area. Alleged stock theft by Tini's people against white and Fingo farms justified a recommendation by some colonial officials that his subjects be disarmed. In early February, the

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<sup>35</sup>For a comprehensive study of this rebellion see M.W. Spicer, "The War of Ngqayecibi (1877-78)", M.A. Thesis, Rhodes University, 1978.

<sup>36</sup>Milton, The Edges of War, p. 266.



stationing of Fingo police on the farm next to Tini's dramatically increased tensions and the chief, accompanied by 100 armed followers, demanded that the Fingoes leave. Consequently, the white officials obtained a warrant for the arrest of both Tini and his brother Ngaka. Hearing this news and spurred on by the arrival of frustrated Xhosa workers at his location, Tini, in the middle of February, warned the police that any of them setting foot on his land would be killed. According to a Xhosa informant, this formerly minor son of the famous Magoma told his followers that:

He did not recognise the Government. He said he had long been living in the mountains; that the white people would not let him rest; they had been hunting for him and he was tired of the bush.<sup>37</sup>

The colonial administration then decided to remove Tini and give his land to white settlers. However, when a force of 1700 Europeans and Fingoes surrounded Tini's farm on the fourth of March, the chief and many of his subjects had already fled to the Waterkloof. During the subsequent campaign to clear Tini and his 200 warriors from these thickly forested ravines, the colonial army arrested many Xhosa tenant farmers who had been neutral, burned their homes and confiscated their property. While Tini and his followers left the Waterkloof in April to combine with Siyolo's rebels in the Amatolas, colonial operations around Fort Beaufort drove many Xhosa into revolt who would not have done so otherwise. Makrexana, Jongumsobomvu's son who had been working in the colony for over thirty years, returned to join Tini and was killed. After fighting several actions Tini became disenchanted with Sandile's leadership in the Amatolas and in June he returned to the Waterkloof area where he was quickly arrested. Convicted of treason by a white court, Tini was shipped off to serve a life sentence on Robben Island but was released under an amnesty

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<sup>37</sup>CCP 1/2/1/38, A.52 of 1878, Correspondence and other Documents relative to the Expedition against Tini Macomo, Statement of Kandilli, 3 February 1878.

in 1888 and returned to the Fort Hare area.<sup>38</sup>

By July 1878 all Xhosa resistance had been crushed. Once again, starvation and European military superiority had contributed to the defeat. Khiva had been killed in battle and Sarhili, with a handful of followers, went into hiding in Bomvanaland. Siyolo, who had left Sandile at the same time as Tini, was shot to death in his former sanctuary from the 1850's, the Fish River Bush. Xhoxho, who had been Maqoma's favourite half-brother and companion on Robben Island, was killed by a settler patrol. In the last days of the rebellion Sandile, who was among a group of fleeing Xhosa, was shot in the side by a distant Fingo war-party and carried into the bush where he bled to death. The paramount's sons, Matanzimi and Edmund, accompanied their cousin Tini to Robben Island and were also released in 1888.<sup>39</sup>

In September 1878 all the Ngqika, even those who had gathered around the Mgwali mission, were driven into Transkei by their old "friend" Charles Brownlee. Kona was shocked. Although he knew resistance would have been fruitless, cooperation had also failed to secure his land. Reluctantly, the last organized remnants of Maqoma's chiefdom moved east of the Kei River to an isolated site called Gqungqe on the Indian Ocean coast where their descendants live today in a fashion very similar to that of the late nineteenth century.<sup>40</sup>

Defeated in three wars with the colony and imprisoned for over a decade, why did the elderly Maqoma once again defy the government in 1871?

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<sup>38</sup>M.W. Spicer, "The War of Ngqayecibi", pp. 203-213. For Tini's location after amnesty see Berning, (ed.), Conversations of Sir George Cory, Conversation with Tini Maqoma, 16 April 1908, pp. 105-106. For Makrexana see the interview with his great grandson, Chief L.W. Maqoma.

<sup>39</sup>Milton, The Edges of War, pp. 270-280.

<sup>40</sup>Brownlee, Reminiscences, p. 315.

Peires and other historians have suggested that the chief had "no aim in defiance but defiance itself."<sup>41</sup> This is too simple. After his release in 1869 Jongumsobomvu recognized that continued military resistance would be futile. He beheld the increased presence of European agriculture, more white police armed with rapid firing rifles and the expansion of towns and Fingo reserves at the expense of the Xhosa chiefdoms. Following the example of his son Tini, Jongumsobomvu attempted to passively manipulate the colonial system in order to recover some of his stolen land which he hoped would eventually become a haven for dissatisfied Xhosa workers and tenant farmers. Such an African-owned agricultural operation could provide opportunities for black advancement and autonomy unheard of under white domination. Maqoma's perception of resistance was no longer based on the narrow interests of his fellow traditional elites, but in the mobilization of Africans who had been proletarianized and disenfranchised by the growth of settler capitalism. Since Maqoma had very few cattle or subjects, the decline of chiefly power was now a mute point and common grievances of landless black wage-labourers and tenant farmers had become paramount. Secluded in one of the last bastions of traditional control through pastoral patronage, Sandile failed to become an effective leader for Xhosa who had been caught in the web of white-supremacist capitalist development. However, Maqoma was not familiar enough with the new colonial system and ultimately failed to secure "legal" claim to his former land around the Kat River Valley. He did not understand the institutionalization of pass laws, the speed of telegraph communication, or the determination of the administration to thwart his plans. His time had passed. It is notable that Xhosa workers remonstrated against Jongumsobomvu's re-banishment by deserting their European masters. The much younger Tini had more success in establishing a large, prosperous African-owned farm but was eventually goaded into fruitless military

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<sup>41</sup>Peires, The Dead Will Arise, p. 302. Also see Mostert, Frontiers, p. 1240.

resistance by paranoid settler oppression. During the war of 1878 Tini's followers were not primarily Jingqi headmen and commoners who were tied to the chief through cattle patronage but frustrated Xhosa workers, such as the well-educated Makrexana, who had abandoned their exploitive white employers. Though class issues had been involved in earlier resistance movements - such as the Kat River rebellion of 1850 - Maqoma's final gesture of defiance in 1871 represented an initial stage in the transition from the resistance of traditional Xhosa leaders to black, class-based protest.

## Conclusion

While the power of a biography is often in its narrative, this approach may obscure significant themes which run throughout the chronology. Consequently, it is necessary to answer important thematic questions concerning Maqoma's career. What formed the basis of his rulership and how did that affect the chief's political goals? Why did Jongumsobomvu's cordial relationship with the missionaries eventually deteriorate? How did he respond to colonial expansion and what was the nature of his military resistance? What image did Maqoma present to the Europeans? What characterized his relationship with women? To what extent did the chief abuse alcohol? Finally, what place should Maqoma occupy in South African history?

### Maqoma as a Xhosa Ruler

As a traditional chief raised in the pre-colonial period, the attainment of two inter-related political goals dominated Jongumsobomvu's career. First, he sought to establish his own autonomous Jingqi chiefdom separate from the Rharhabe paramountcy. Second, Maqoma doggedly worked to preserve the independence and authority of the Xhosa royals through the maintenance of the pastoral patronage system and the protection of his land and subjects.

By the early 1820's Jongumsobomvu, as a young adult, had used loan cattle from his father, Ngqika, to develop a substantial private herd through the profits of increase sharing. Attracting followers who were eager to care for Maqoma's cattle in return for milk, the Jingqi chief divorced himself from Ngqika and moved to the fertile valley of the upper Kat. Unfortunately, colonial expansion forced Jongumsobomvu back into his father's domain where the Jingqi became a sub-section of the paramountcy. Although Maqoma's regency in the 1830's temporarily satisfied his

political ambitions, with the rise of Sandile in the 1840's the Jingqi ruler repeatedly attempted to migrate back to the Kat River. Distance from the paramountcy would increase Maqoma's independence. However, all these efforts were foiled by continued colonial aggression and as late as 1857 Jongumsobomvu, as a conquered and nearly dispossessed chief, was still attempting to separate from the Ngqika paramountcy.

Maqoma knew that the continued colonial seizure of Xhosa cattle and people throughout the nineteenth century threatened chiefly authority. It was a slow and steady method of transferring the wealth of the Xhosa into settler hands. The more it became successful the more land and labour the settlers needed to maintain their enlarging herds. In 1837 Jongumsobomvu realized that the Fingo reserve at Fort Thompson was attracting his hungry, war-ravaged subjects and he successfully strived to remove it. Maqoma became alienated from his missionary friends in 1844 when the Cape government declared that all Xhosa living around missions were not subject to the traditional law of the chiefs. Similarly, on the three occasions when the Jingqi ruler went to war with the Europeans the cause was always a colonial threat to chiefly power over Xhosa society. In late 1834 the whites had stolen so much cattle and land that the young warriors were becoming disenchanted with their rulers and urged them to retaliate. Significantly, the event which finally prompted Maqoma to sanction stock raids on the settlers was the wounding of his half-brother Xhoxho by a colonial patrol. Similar European aggression in the mid-1840's resulted in further resistance by the Xhosa rulers. Finally, Maqoma rebelled against colonial rule in 1850 because it was eroding the system of cattle based patronage which the chiefs used to control their subjects. Observing that the Cattle-Killing of 1856-57 was an overwhelming movement of commoners to destroy the failed aristocracy, Jongumsobomvu initially sought to undermine the amathamba but eventually sanctioned this slaughter

in order to remain in power as a popular ruler.

Throughout his career, Maqoma relied on witchcraft accusations as a form of social coercion and an instrument of political manipulation. Those who defied the Jingqi ruler were usually smelled out by one of his witchfinders and tortured or burned to death. This was an ancient institution. When Matwa, another son of the late Ngqika, attempted to form a rival, mission protected chiefdom in the late 1830's, Jongumsobomvu thwarted these plans by having his half-brother's primary supporters denounced for sorcery. Since accusing a chief would set a dangerous precedent, Matwa was never smelled out and Maqoma had one of his own men tortured for assaulting him. The Jingqi ruler realized that witchcraft execution had to be employed indirectly against political rivals who were also chiefs. In 1842 Maqoma hired a witchfinder who was working in the colony and therefore protected from retaliation, to accuse Sandile's mother, Suthu, of sorcery. Hoping that this would discredit the young, crippled paramount, Maqoma planned to regain the Rharhabe regency. Usurping weak rulers through indirect use of the smelling out ritual had occurred previously among the Xhosa chiefdoms. However, missionary interference prevented Jongumsobomvu from inheriting the paramountcy and he renewed the creeping Jingqi secession. Without doubt, Maqoma ruthlessly employed witchcraft accusations to control his subjects and eliminate enemies.

While Jongumsobomvu would not hesitate to use coercion, as a ruler and judge he was considered both sagacious and fair. Many oral traditions relate to his Solomon-like wisdom in mediating disputes between his subjects and in this area he was thought to be superior to neighbouring rulers. Even as a young man, Maqoma's advice was repeatedly sought by most of the other Xhosa chiefs including Hintsa and Sarhili, nominal paramounds of the nation.

A significant test of any political system is its flexibility to break traditional molds to elevate its best leaders to meet crises. In the mid-nineteenth century the Xhosa faced their greatest predicament - increasing colonial intrusion - but the system was too rigid to allow the most capable leader, Maqoma, to come to power. The conflict between Great and Right-Hand sons, Sandile and Maqoma respectively, frequently distracted the Ngqika chiefdom from the main European threat. However, missionary interference did contribute to the failure of Jongumsobomvu to usurp his less effectual half-brother.

Maqoma ruled during an era when increasingly intrusive forces were undermining his ability to control Rharhabe society. However, in attempting to pursue personal ambitions and preserve Xhosa independence the essential core of Jongumsobomvu's character remained a dogged tenacity combined with remarkable flexibility in trying to overcome problems.

#### Maqoma and the Missionaries

From the late 1820's to the late 1830's, Maqoma developed friendly relationships with the European missionaries who were operating throughout Xhosaland. Feigning an interest in Christianity, Jongumsobomvu attempted to use these strangers as a medium of communication with the powerful Cape Colony and a source of information. The chief's missionary friends wrote endless letters to various colonial officials and governors on his behalf. Jongumsobomvu's arrest during the 1833 LMS conference at Philipton was a theatrical masterpiece which gained him the sympathy and admiration of all the missionaries present and sharpened their criticism of colonial aggression against the Xhosa. In this period Maqoma failed to understand that all missionaries were not official representatives of the colonial government. Such confusion was amplified by the fact that a few missionaries, such as Thomson, were paid colonial agents. Lacking political connections, John Ross was unable to prevent the expulsion of



his beloved chief from the Kat River. Similarly, in the early 1830's Friedrich Kayser and James Laing, both friends of Maqoma, failed to halt colonial cattle and labour raids against the Jingqi. However, Jongumsobomvu's faith in his missionary connections was revitalized in 1836 and 1837 when John Philip seemed instrumental in the withdrawal of the colonial army from Ciskeian Xhosaland. Additionally, Maqoma sent his sons and daughters to mission schools where they were trained as interpreters and scribes. The chief had learned early in life that such skills were vital when dealing with the colony. Missionaries also taught Maqoma the benefit of western medical, agricultural and military technology. The surprising credulity of these white clergymen toward Jongumsobomvu was illustrated constantly. On one occasion Laing and Kayser were overjoyed by the chief's promise to try to abolish witchcraft executions but failed to doubt his sincerity when the practise continued. For over a decade Maqoma's missionaries believed him to be on the verge of a religious conversion which would never take place.

In the late 1830's Maqoma's relationship with the missionaries dramatically changed. Previously, the chief had managed to keep the missions a safe distance from his great place. This prevented the missionaries from witnessing the aspects of Xhosa society which Jongumsobomvu knew they abhorred. Nevertheless, in 1839 the Reverend Henry Calderwood insisted that his Blinkwater station be constructed within sight of the chief's residence and he began directly interfering in the affairs of the community. Subsequent conflict with Maqoma prompted Calderwood to condemn the chief as a drunkard and abduct his younger sister who was about to be married to a neighbouring chief for a considerable brideprice. From that point Jongumsobomvu began to question the value of his missionary connections. When Governor Maitland, in 1844, declared all Xhosa living around missions to be exempt from chiefly rule, Maqoma severed all ties with these former friends and prevented his

subjects from visiting the stations. The appointment of Calderwood as government agent to the recently conquered Ngqika chiefdoms in 1847 completed Jongumsobomvu's alienation from the mission communities. Clearly, the disadvantages of the missionaries' seditious influence were beginning to outweigh the advantages provided by their friendship. Maqoma should have seen this earlier. Before the retrocession of Queen Adelaide Province in 1837 Jongumsobomvu needed the missionaries to voice his grievances but after regaining independence it would have been wiser for him to have immediately expelled these harbingers of westernization who eventually sowed the seeds for future white supremacy.

There has been considerable debate as to whether missionaries were agents of imperial conquest. Philip's relationship with Maqoma in the early to mid-1830's seems to highlight the philanthropic role of missionaries as portrayed by Monica Wilson. Conversely, Calderwood's confrontation with Jongumsobomvu in the late 1830's and the former's role as government agent responsible for the implementation of colonial rule over the Ngqika in 1847 would lend credence to Nosipho Majeke's claim that missionaries represented the advance guard of conquest. Recent scholars have attempted to develop a more sophisticated interpretation of these evangelists. Maqoma's case supports the Comaroffs' theory that while the political impact of missionaries was ambiguous, they ultimately contributed to the destruction of African independence through the fostering of a black, capitalist middle-class willing to challenge the traditional aristocracy. However, in the long run it was the Reverend Calderwood and Charles Brownlee, the son of a missionary, who would have the greatest influence on extending colonial rule over the Xhosa.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Monica Wilson, "Cooperation and Conflict: The Eastern Cape Frontier", in Wilson and Thompson, The Oxford History of South Africa, pp. 233-271. Majeke, The Role of Missionaries in Conquest. Jean and John Comaroff, "Christianity and Colonialism in South Africa", American Ethnologist 13, 1 (1986), pp. 1-22.

In his relations with various missionaries, Maqoma consistently displayed a keen intellectual interest in acquiring new medical, military and agricultural technology to benefit his chiefdom. Considerably more clever and intelligent than the gullible and naive evangelists who he repeatedly duped into believing the possibility of his conversion, Jongumsobomvu was a strictly secular and pragmatic individual.

#### Maqoma and Colonial Expansion

Despite being the victim of repeated colonial raids and expulsions, Maqoma always attempted to placate the Europeans through cattle-tribute and negotiation. The chief was painfully aware of colonial military superiority and strove to prevent armed conflict. Restraining his subjects from rustling settler stock, Jongumsobomvu usually gave the Europeans any number of cattle which they claimed the Jingqi had stolen. With the taking of the Ceded Territory in 1819 the young chief realized that the aims of the colony were unlike those of neighbouring African chiefdoms who would usually fight to capture cattle. The Europeans wanted land. Maqoma experienced continual evictions throughout the late 1820's and early 30's and refused to offer serious military resistance until militant young warriors demanded retaliation. Defeated by the subsequent and unexpected colonial invasion of 1835, Maqoma, as Rharhabe regent, manipulated Governor D'Urban's desire for a quick end to the costly war. During negotiations the chief gained concessions, such as the continued authority of the Xhosa rulers under British occupation, by subtly threatening to continue the conflict.

Throughout the late 1830's and early 1840's Jongumsobomvu supported the Stockenstrom Treaty of 1836 as it had restored Xhosa autonomy, prevented further colonial raids and established a system whereby disputes with the settlers were resolved through negotiation. The Jingqi chief moved closer to the boundary in order to reoccupy some of his former land

along the lower Kat and communicate more effectively with the colonial officials at the border posts. At the same time Maqoma's relationship with the missionaries was deteriorating, he developed close ties with Charles Stretch, the colonial diplomatic agent to the Rharhabe. Jongumsobomvu appreciated the direct line of communication with the colony which could be used to avoid unnecessary disputes. Although the colony revoked the treaty in 1844 and renewed aggression against the Xhosa chiefdoms, Maqoma worked diligently to reinstate the system and avert a disastrous armed conflict. Consequently, the Jingqi chief, who was no longer regent, disapproved of Sandile's confrontational policy and withdrew early from the "War of the Axe". With the conquest of Ciskeian Xhosaland in 1847 the Europeans became less disposed to negotiate with the chiefs and Maqoma was temporarily exiled to Port Elizabeth. By 1850 Jongumsobomvu had abandoned his attempts to placate the whites as their hegemony was jeopardizing chiefly authority.

Although Maqoma was not completely powerless against the whites until after the Cattle-Killing, the Xhosa never had a chance against the increasing might of the Cape Colony. In this situation Africans had a limited number of survival choices. Many opted to accept the inevitability of the new order in the hope of using European dominance to gain a better economic and political position. With strong vested interests in pre-colonial society, Jongumsobomvu ultimately chose to resist the advance of Cape hegemony because he realized that it could only result in the complete disintegration of his chiefly power and identity.

#### Maqoma as a Military Resister

For Jongumsobomvu armed resistance against European intrusion was always a last resort. However, more than any other Xhosa chief Maqoma adapted traditional methods of fighting to effectively counter European military superiority. During the pre-colonial era Xhosa warfare was

characterized by large set-piece battles in which throwing spears rarely inflicted heavy casualties. Additionally, while the acquisition of an enemy's cattle would often be the target of such campaigns, armies from rival chiefdoms never attacked one another's productive capability - crops, women and children. Such tactics would have led to mass starvation on both sides. As a young adult Maqoma heard about how the Europeans had devastated Ndlambe's chiefdom in 1811 and 1819 by slaughtering his warriors with the concentrated firepower of muskets and artillery and by burning all his kraals and crops. Horses also gave the colonials the advantage of superior mobility which meant that even a small number of mounted raiders could seize cattle from a chiefdom and depart before the ruler organized a concerted response.

The Battle of Amalinde in 1818 had taught the youthful Maqoma a painful lesson about the effectiveness of a surprise attack. As a result, in the 1820's Jongumsobomvu foiled small scale settler raids against his fledgling chiefdom by employing rudimentary ambush tactics. In order to recover stolen cattle, Jingqi warriors frequently used thick bush to conceal themselves and surprise small parties of colonial raiders. Realizing that his men were no match for a concentrated European attack, Maqoma did not resist the persistent expulsions which began in 1829 and continued throughout the early 1830's. Gradually, Jongumsobomvu's warriors acquired a significant number of firearms and some horses which they used in 1835 to ambush and harass the colonial invaders. This was the first time that Maqoma had employed the rough terrain of the Amatolas in order to facilitate his new tactics by eluding the cumbersome British columns. In fact, Jongumsobomvu's campaign was so efficient that D'Urban feared the war could drag on and discredit him in London. Not until 1846 did the Jingqi chief reluctantly lead similar operations. However, it was in the Waterkloof during the war of 1850-53 that Maqoma fully developed his ambush tactics into a sophisticated form of guerrilla warfare. The

heavily forested ravines of Mtontsi contributed significantly to Jongumsobomvu's ability to confuse and torment the British soldiers who were trained to fight large, set-piece battles in the open. In fact, Maqoma's use of the Waterkloof somewhat resembled Moshweshwe's employment of flat-topped mountains as strongholds.

In 1835 Maqoma was forced to negotiate with the Europeans because their scorched earth policy had resulted in widespread hunger among the Xhosa. Relying on a logistical system which transported supplies from the colony, the British army, unable to engage Jongumsobomvu's elusive warriors, seized cattle, burned crops and kraals, and sent hundreds of women and children into the colony as forced labour. Maqoma could not counter this type of total warfare which the Europeans would repeatedly employ to defeat the Xhosa. The process was duplicated in 1847. During the "War of Mlanjeni", from 1850-53, Jongumsobomvu temporarily distracted Governor Smith by occupying Mtontsi which was located within the colony. The Waterkloof campaign tied down colonial troops for many months and prevented them from attacking the main Ngqika food reserves in the Amatolas. This enabled the Ngqika to conduct the longest concerted war against Europeans in South African history. Unfortunately, a new governor, George Cathcart, decided to ignore Maqoma's Mtontsi detachment and initiated scorched earth operations in the Amatolas which resulted in mass starvation and ultimate capitulation. Jongumsobomvu had only delayed the inevitable. While he had been responsible for considerable military innovations, Maqoma was unable to transform the aspects of Xhosa society which made it vulnerable to colonial attack. Perhaps the greatest tribute to Maqoma's military skill was that he humbled the famous British Army and forced rather conservative officers to adapt to new African methods of fighting.

Initially, political rivalry with other chiefs and rulers hampered

Maqoma's response to the Europeans. During the 1820's Jongumsobomvu saw the colony as a stronger regional power which demanded tribute from the weaker chiefdoms. He did not yet conceive the common threat which Europeans represented to the very existence of all African states. In fact, Maqoma would occasionally seek colonial assistance against African adversaries such as when he gained the regency over Tyali. Further illustrating this fact was the Jingqi attack on the Thembu in 1828 at a time when Jongumsobomvu was facing continual colonial raids. Additionally, the dispute between Maqoma and Sandile significantly weakened the Ngqika during the "War of the Axe" (1846-47). However, by 1850 the Jingqi chief had experienced colonial conquest and during the "War of Mlanjeni" he transcended internal and external political rivalries to enhance resistance against the common white enemy.

Of all the nineteenth century African rulers who resisted European expansion in South Africa, and perhaps the entire continent, Maqoma was the most successful. Other leaders failed to alter their martial techniques in order to better combat the colonial armies. Despite an initial victory at Isandhlwana in 1879, Cetshwayo's Zulu Kingdom continued to rely on traditional mass attacks and fell like a house of cards to withering British firepower. In 1893 Lobengula's Ndebele were defeated in a similar fashion. Moshweshwe, king of Lesotho in the mid-nineteenth century, adopted the Basuto pony and firearms which foiled periodic Boer and British raids but he never experienced a concerted European offensive. The only other African resister to make military adaptations comparable with Maqoma's was Samori Toure who, at the turn of the century, employed horses and firearms to wage a twenty year guerrilla struggle against the French in West Africa. Tragically, like Jongumsobomvu, Samori was also unable to adjust and protect the vulnerable productive elements of his society. In fairness to other resisters, Maqoma did have considerably more time to develop his adaptations and did not have to confront the

rapid-firing rifles and machine-guns of the "Scramble for Africa" period.

#### Magoma and the Representation of Identity

During his first encounters with Europeans in the 1810's and 20's, Magoma wore the traditional leopard skin kaross of a Xhosa chief. However, by the 1830's whenever Jongumsobomvu met with missionaries or colonial officials he usually sported European style clothing. In fact, the higher the rank of the officer or official, the more ornate and militaristic Magoma would dress. Pieces from various colonial uniforms highlighted by gold braided tunics and feather plumed hats became the chief's standard attire for conferences with governors. While this may initially seem trivial, the transition reveals how the chief thought he should portray his identity to the whites. From his missionary contacts Magoma learned that the Europeans believed that he was an inferior savage. Intelligently, the chief donned western clothing as an attempt to negotiate with the powerful whites on an equal basis. Wearing such garments also served to increase Jongumsobomvu's image as a friend of the missionaries. Throughout the late 1820's and 1830's, Magoma's mother, wives and daughters visited the missions where they acquired European dresses and learned to read the Bible. This tactic went far beyond clothing. By the late 1830's the Jingqi chief was living in a large square dwelling with a fenced enclosure for his horses. Conversely, by dismissing missionaries and usually wearing traditional dress, Tyali, Magoma's rival half-brother, was appealing to conservative elements within Xhosa society. However, with the creation of British Kaffraria in 1847 it became obvious to Magoma that the Europeans would never deal with the Xhosa chiefs as equals. The braid and plumes were replaced by more practical, yet western clothing. During the guerilla operations in the early 1850's Magoma's insurgents wore European clothes to protect them from the thorn bushes of Mtontsi and to provide pockets for carrying ammunition.



### Maqoma and Women

There is a tendency on the part of settler and western historians to criticize Xhosa chiefs for oppressing and exploiting African women.<sup>2</sup> As a pre-colonial ruler in a patriarchal society Maqoma conformed to the traditional dowry system which the missionaries viewed as trading women for cattle and punished his wives for defiance. However, it is both unfair and unacademic to judge Jongumsobomvu on the basis of modern western values which neither he nor his wives shared. In fact, his relationship with women, although generally characterized by dominance and exploitation as in most societies of the age including that of the settlers, was quite complex. Until the 1850's the chief's mother, Nothonto, remained his primary councillor and personal confidant. Their bond was close. Ruling her own kraal within the Jingqi chiefdom since the 1820's, Nothonto would always administer the great place during her son's absence. Through befriending the wives of the Reverends Ross and Kayser, she was primarily responsible for developing and maintaining cordial relations with neighbouring missionaries. Similarly, when Maqoma turned against the missions Nothonto supported him by becoming a traditional rainmaker. On the other hand, some Xhosa women, such as Maqoma's sister Hena, used Christianity and missionary influence to circumvent traditional obligations.<sup>3</sup> Although Jongumsobomvu could be brutal in chastising disobedient wives, his favourite spouses, such as Katyi, enjoyed attentiveness and sharing. In both 1847 and 1857 various wives of Maqoma volunteered to accompany him into exile.

There are many examples of the devotion and loyalty of Jingqi women

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<sup>2</sup>Jeff Guy, "Gender Oppression in Southern Africa's Precapitalist Societies", in Cherryl Walker, (ed.), Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945 (Cape Town, 1990), pp. 33-47.

<sup>3</sup>For a thorough study see Debbie Gaitskell, "Devout Domesticity? A Century of African Women's Christianity in South Africa", in Walker, Women and Gender, pp. 251-272.

to their chief. In 1847 Amakeya, Maqoma's daughter, offered herself to a British officer if he agreed not to exile her father. During Maqoma's three wars against the colony, women served as messengers and peace envoys, and smuggled ammunition to the chief's elusive warriors. In the "War of Mlanjeni" many women accompanied Jongumsobomvu to Mtontsi where they gave their lives fighting for independence. Unfortunately, the names of most of Maqoma's wives and daughters were not recorded by European observers who considered them insignificant and they have all but disappeared from Jingqi oral tradition.

#### Maqoma and Alcohol

Beginning in the early 1830's, Maqoma periodically indulged in colonial alcohol. However, subsequent European reports which describe him as a drunken and unstable ruler were exaggerated and even fabricated in order to justify the chief's dispossession. As described in chapter four, the colonial evidence concerning Jongumsobomvu's alleged alcoholism contains too many contradictions. Like many people Maqoma used alcohol to relieve stress at times when his life appeared to have totally fallen apart. Had he been an abusive or compulsive drinker, he would not have been able to abandon alcohol during periods of personal success. Throughout the early to mid-1840's, British officers plied the chief with liquor and in 1847 they used coercion to keep him constantly intoxicated. It is also possible that during the late 1830's and early 1840's, Maqoma was attempting to gather valuable information by using liquor to loosen the tongues of his colonial drinking partners at Fort Beaufort. Following a decade of undeniable sobriety, in 1857 Maqoma, whose chiefdom was being destroyed by the cattle-killing and colonial dispossession, was reported to be drunk in the taverns of Stutterheim. Since the only evidence of this is the correspondence of John Maclean, who was responsible for dismantling the Jingqi community, such allegations are also questionable.

Magoma's Place in History

There are two conflicting interpretations of Jongumsobomvu. Dominated by a settler heritage, most written histories have portrayed the Jingqi chief as a cattle rustler and drunken troublemaker. He is seen as a villain. A savage, backward-looking African ruler who represented an obstacle to the progress offered by European civilization. More recent, liberal work has described Magoma as a "brilliant but volatile" chief who provoked war with the colony. Conversely, Xhosa oral tradition views Jongumsobomvu as a hero in the two hundred year long struggle against white supremacy. Modern African nationalists evoke his name to provide their movement with a romantic sense of having deep historical roots. Both these conflicting images of the Jingqi chief have been employed to support adversarial positions in the recent racially based disturbances in South Africa. In reality, Magoma was neither a villain nor a hero. He was a political ruler with established personal goals which he pursued, believing that they remained - and possibly they were - in harmony with the best interests of his people. Throughout his life, Jongumsobomvu strived for the preservation of independent chiefly power and the protection of Xhosa land, cattle and people from colonial seizure. It was unfortunate that he was in his fifties before working to transcend inter-African rivalry in order to present a united front against European dominance. However, unlike Magoma, most African resisters thoroughly failed to recognize the special and permanent nature of colonial conquest until it was too late. As such Jongumsobomvu persists as a powerful symbol to the Xhosa and definitely deserves more widespread recognition for his life-long fight against white oppression. While the reburial of his alleged remains in the Ciskei in 1978 was primarily a mechanism for the advancement of Lent Magoma as a Bantustan politician, to most Xhosa, many of whom had attended Steven Biko's funeral the previous year, it represented the return of an exceptional leader who had ultimately sacrificed his life for the cause of liberation. This remains Magoma's

legacy.

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Grahamstown Journal

Isigidimi SamaXosa

Kaffrarian Watchman

King William's Town Gazette  
 Queenstown Free Press  
 South African Commercial Advertiser  
 Standard and Mail  
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 Wesleyan Missionary Notices

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