



## THE PEOPLING OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

The history of regions is not the same as the history of (ordinary) people. In Southern Africa anthropologists and historians (sometimes including expert tribal historians) have been preoccupied with regional history although they have not left the history of people entirely unrecorded. The histories of people are framed and phrased as histories of families and emblem-groups (also more popularly known as totemic groups). Histories of families or emblem-groups may become attenuated to histories of chiefly families or emblem-groups. In their greatest refinement these chiefly family or emblem histories are genealogies and histories of rulers of tribes and since tribes are units with territorial significance -- such histories come round full circle to regional histories, especially when popularised.

Distinctions between regional and emblem histories are not as clear-cut as they might appear from the above. Occasionally there are histories of dominance by a tribe (e.g. the Rozwi histories) or by an emblem-group which may gain ascendancy over other units by virtue of a religious ideal of greater popularity or by virtue of being associated with an outstanding family or individual. (e.g. moyo/heart, gau/lion, kwena/crocodile, singo/?(tail, trunk, razor).)

A comparison of regional histories fixes certain areas as centres of dispersal or as centres with a great many confusing cross-over migration lines. The exact determination of the locality of these migration-centres and their listing will be an essential first step in the attempt to date the historical sequences of area different tribal regional histories. An examination of these migration-centres will then establish the tribal layers for the historian.

Such migration-centres in Southern Africa are as follows:

- (1) SW Transvaal and Mafeking area (Sotho-Group)
- (2) Zoutpansberg and adjoining Limpopo valley
- (3) Matopo area and N and NE of this

Minor migration-centres are

- (1) Swaziland
- (2) Middelberg (Tvl.)
- (3) Phalaborwa
- (4) Serowe
- (5) Okavango Delta
- (6) Ovamboland

Other important migration-centres not examined but suggested by tribal histories:

- (1) Barotseland skirting the western Zambezi Basin
- (2) Chobe region of the Zambezi
- (3) A Zambezi ford somewhere north-west of Salisbury
- (4) A Zambezi crossing into the coastal lowlands
- (5) An entry point in the (U)Mbandu region.

Since the country is not uniformly fertile or uniformly well-watered, some of these centres are natural approaches to regions further south. But this is not always the case as e.g. Phalaborwa (mostly now in the Game Reserve). In dealing with some tribal histories a remarkable fact emerges: that for these tribes there are no cross-over centres, or migration centres.

The tribal or cultural sequences can be ascertained in some areas without great difficulty but in some areas (e.g. those depopulated by drought) there may be considerable confusion. It is necessary to state these tribal or cultural sequences in the cross-over or migration-centres so that they can then be compared in order to "layer" and date the tribal references for the whole area. This method of comparison suggests that certain main periods ought to be distinguished in Southern Africa. These are listed below together with a descriptive name chosen mainly with reference to the Venda (and also Shona and Luŕelu) areas:

- |            |  |                |
|------------|--|----------------|
| Period (1) | Zulu (about 1750 onwards)                                  | Natal          |
| (2)        | Changamire-Mambo-VhaNdalama (about 1500)                   | Zambezi valley |
| (3)        | Butwa-Botwa-Vhuhwa-Uxwa-Vhulubely                          | Matopos        |
| (4)        | Vhukalanga-Vhumbedzi-Biri                                  |                |
| (5)        | Tonga  |                |
| (6)        | Ngona-Lala-Kattee (either non-Bantu or very ancient Bantu) |                |

As each cross-over ~~xxxxx~~ or migration-centre was invaded afresh tribes and their traditions were dispersed into adjoining territories. This makes it appear as if certain cultures (civilisations?) had a longer duration than they really had, and the true facts of the situation will ultimately have to be resolved by stating the layering of each recognised tribal area (of to-day) in ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ greater detail than has as yet been done. But in the meantime the attempt to gather together all tribal historical references of a certain kind and unrolling them towards their Dating the above sequences is at best a speculative matter within the limits of apparent centre produces satisfactory preliminary results.

tribal history. It is necessary to consider other evidence, e.g. archeological, and ~~xx~~ and cultural. But purely from within tribal historical data an artificial time-measure can be constructed to suit particular kinds of areas and particular kinds of culture. Thus the Zulu period can be said to begin between 1750 and 1800, while the Mambo-Changamire-Thoho-ya-ndou period may be placed between 1400-1500, say approximately 1450, but perhaps even a little later, say 1500.

The main concern of this pper is to put before the seminar the evidence for the existence of a "Mambo Empire" ("Mambo Federation"?) and for the existence of the Butwa ~~xxxxxx~~ or Vhuhwa" Empire which may or may not have been identical with the empire known to the Portuguese as "Greater Mocarangua". The Portuguese stated that "Abutua" lay to the NW of the Manamotapa's kingdom. They also distinguished the Reino of Manamotapa from that of the ancient Mocarangua which included, formerly, Sedanda, Quiteve, Manhica, Bororo, Botonga, and Mocarangua itself. Clearly their sources for information on these two kingdoms need not have been the same as they travelled along the Zambezi (where were the Manamotapa's lands) but also struck into the interior (where were the ancient lands of Mocarangua).



### ABUTUA

Apart from dos Santos' references to Abutua ~~my~~ sources for the existence of Abutua are as follows:

- (1) Rhodesian: (a) Bullock p. 13 (in 1927 edition) cf. Buhwa, Guru Buhwa, Gunu-uhwa (in Goba territory?)  
(b) Abrahams in NADA quoting Zezuru and Korejore traditions  
(2) Transvaal and Bechuanaland: (c) Venda traditions: Vhuhwa, (Vhuhe?) also see Stayt, and Motenda (Ramabulana, p.155)  
(d) ~~Rakha~~ Birwa traditions: Bothwa inn MMA-Bothwa

~~Abutua~~ Vhuhwa lies to the ~~west~~ west of Mbelengwa and ahead of them lie Mambo and Mposi. Vhuhwa is a mountain in Southern Rhodesia and lies in the NW part of Southern Rhodesia. There is some doubt whether Vhuhwa (\*βuβwa) is the same as Bothwa (\*βuNtwa) or Uswa (\*βucwa or \*βutwa) although the former could have been derived from the latter.

It seems that Vhuhwa (whose chiefs were amakhosi) was an invading culture from across the Zambezi while that of VhuRozwi, which also came from across the river, had chiefs ~~amakhosi~~ with the title of Mambo. I think the Vhuhwa chieftainships will prove to be part of an invasion down the western side of Lake Tanganyika from a place where there must have been a high ~~mountain~~ volcanic mountain which never did erupt but in which earth tremors appear to have disturbed the settlement. It appears -- translating the legends into modern geophysical terms -- that the mountain was generally ~~xxx~~ quiet although its smoke could be seen frequently and that on one occasion alone did it set fire to the settlement. The exodus of <sup>earlier</sup> the VhaNdalama appears to have been the latest of the invasions which/carried the <sup>still earlier</sup> Herero to SWA and/the Zulus to Natal. The Zulus who were "naked men" (MaBunyu) left their remnants as the VhaZimba in Southern Rhodesia and as the MaDzwiti (VhaNziti) near Lourenco Marques while also leaving their name (Zezuru) and their ~~tradition~~ popular etymology of the term Karanga (viz. Ka- or Kwa-Langa) amongst the Shona tribes. It is certain that the popular etymology for the tribal name Karanga as ama- or aba-kwa-Langa (the people of Langa) is nonsense, the Karanga having no such etymology for their name. The Karanga themselves employ neither the word Mambo nor the word Inkosi in the meaning of "chief" but only ishe. Either of the other words, if used, have a titular significance only being applied to the foreign chiefs. It must therefore be concluded that the Karanga are considerably older than either those who acknowledge mambo or inkosi.

This does not mean that the language known as Zulu today was spoken by the Zulu invaders. The Nguni languages (which include modern Zulu, Swazi, Ndebele, Nrebele, Bhaca, Phutshi, Old Mfengu, ~~and~~ Old Ngoni, and modern Xhosa, ~~and~~ Mpondo, and Mpondomise) were not necessarily introduced by the Zulus. It seems more likely that they were introduced by a stream of immigrants from the direction of the Victoria Falls across NE Bechuanaland leaving behind them the AnaNrebele right across the Central Transvaal before they settled in the present Swaziland area. The Zulus may have taken the longer way round from their homelands on the borders of the present Congo, Angola, and N. Rhodesia (Barotseland) across the Kafue into Southern Rhodesia while the Nrebele-Ngoni-Swati crossed the Zambezi above the Victoria Falls at an earlier date.

In attempting to find their kinsmen two distinct return migrations may be distinguished: (1) The Zulu return and (2) the Ngoni-~~xxxxxx~~ Nrebele return. The Ngoni-Nrebele return came to an end in Barotseland while the Zulu return came to an end in Tanganyika, but was preceded by that of the Dzwiti/Nziti and was perhaps connected with the Zimba/Dzimba influx.

The kingdom of Vhuhwa in Southern Rhodesia broke up before that of Mambo which came in between 1400 and 1500 reaching its peak between 1500 and 1600 with local developments (viz. Manamotapa, Nemutapa, Mwenemutapa and Rozwi-Changamire and Rozwi-Chaminuka — who was skinned alive by the AnaNdebele) ~~xx~~ at later stages.

We can thus place the collapse of Vhuhwa as not later than between 1400-1500, say 1450, while from that time on the strength of the Mambo kingdoms increased. Nevertheless there are sufficient indications that Vhuhwa grew out of a ~~xxxxxx~~ kingdom north of the Zambezi whose location must have been (a) west of the tip of Lake Tanganyika and (b) east of the tip of Lake Tanganyika.

The Karanga empire, nevertheless, was not a product of either ~~xxxxxx~~ Vhuhwa or of Mambo-Nemutapa, but precedes both of these.

#### MAMBO

The tribal references to the kingdom of Mambo are numerous and widely distributed.

Great care should be exercised with the term Mambo. I think the following applications of the term should be distinguished so that an already tangled situation should not become permanently confused:

- (a) the stem as the name of a country: Meumbo, AbaseMbo, Matswapong (but cf. -tswapa, -tswapana) Ndonga, Kwanyama, Zulu, Swati, Tvl. Birwa (?)
- (b) Mambo/Vhambo as the name of a chief i.e. a personal name (Venda) ~~xxxxxx~~
- (c) Mambo/Vhambo as the name of an ancestor (Venda) (Hio-Tshwari) (Kwanyama)
- (d) the stem as the name of a tribe: OvaWambo (NB Kwanyama only) but cf.
- (e) Mambo as a title meaning "chief" (Shona) abaseMbo
- (f) As name of a dynasty: Mwana waMambo (Venda, Luβely, Shona)