

## PREFACE

This is the first full-length study of a Xhosa prince or chief. The Xhosas are resident in the eastern part of the Cape Province of South Africa, and their history is studded with a galaxy of remarkable men of royal blood. These were the first black people to come into contact with the white man in Southern Africa. Of the chiefs I have chosen Sandile for various reasons. His life-span covers the glory of Xhosa nationhood, the more important wars with the British Colonial Government, the national suicide of the Xhosas and the tragedy of his personal story. Thanks too to the artists Frederick I'Ons and Thomas Baines, we have more portraits of Sandile than of any other chief.

Without the writings of Charles Brownlee and the researches of Sir George Cory and Dr George McCall Theal this book could not have been written. I have however gone back to their own sources and have drawn from numerous additional material. Further, I have tried to see the tumultuous course of Cape history as much from the black as the white point of view. From earliest childhood I have been in contact with Xhosa people. I have studied their language and their customs, and their history has long been of great interest to me. Sandile was one of the last great chiefs and, though not the most distinguished man among them, he is the one who has intrigued me most. I have also felt that he has been given a rather raw deal by all white and some Xhosa historians and needs a more sympathetic approach. Of course he was a rascal and often weak-willed, but he was also gifted with intelligence and diplomacy and he was a great patriot with a cultural awareness years ahead of his time.

I must make it quite clear, the Cape scene being as complex as it was, that I have concentrated only on the House of Ngqika (Gaika), and that the Boer, Bushman and Hottentot upheavals, as well as other domestic problems, fall beyond the scope of my study. I have also been firm in not allowing myself to be side-tracked by the fascinating life-stories of other princes and have only referred to them where they assist clarification of my subject, as in the case of Sarili who

deserves a full biographical study. I am concerned with the Xhosa people, and particularly the Gaikas or ama-Ngqika, and not with the other tribes in the Eastern Cape Colony in the nineteenth century.

It is impossible to tell the story of Sandile without sketching his general background and without dealing with the life of his father. This may have been done at greater length than may be thought necessary, but I cannot see how one can give a clear picture of the Eastern Cape scene without doing so, particularly to those unfamiliar with this very important evolution of South African race relations. In this Life of Sandile many of the key problems of South Africa will be seen either in embryo or in actual evolution and it is for this reason too that Sandile's life and background are so interesting.

The spelling of names has been a problem. The Xhosa language contains three clicks made by the tongue denoted by the letters c, q and x, probably Hottentot or Bushman influence which seems to indicate that Bantu association with them was longer than generally supposed. The most difficult click is the q made by the tongue against the back palate, and for this reason a name such as Ngqika was given the approximate pronunciation of Gaika. In the same way other difficult names, and even those less strange, were simplified and anglicised. I have preferred to use the most modern and most correct spelling of names, but have decided to use both the easy and difficult versions where a name is startling to the eye, and I hope in such a way as not to confuse the reader.

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JOHANNES MEINTJES

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