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THE HISTORY OF SEKWATI.

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## THE HISTORY OF SEKWATI.

By Rev. JOHANNES AUGUST WINTER.

### INTRODUCTION.

When the capital of old Tulare at Steelpoort had been destroyed by Mosilikatse, after an awful fight which lasted a whole day, and the deep donga was quite filled up with corpses,\* the Zulus settled down at Steelpoort for some time. Sekwati went to the north of Zoutpansberg, and by killing out little kraals and capturing women and cattle, he afterwards became a great man. At that time Mosilikatse used to send *impis* there annually to collect taxes. Sekwati thereupon fled into the Woodbush, always coming out again after the Zulus had left. Later on he came to Magalie, where the Boers and the Zulus in vain tried to storm his stronghold, and whence, after these had gone home, Sekwati sent them peace-offerings. He must have been a genius. In his old age he became partially paralysed in his feet. He was kind to the first missionaries, whom he assisted in 1861 in his isolated stronghold, Thaba Mosigo, on the farm Hackney—where I still found the hut alongside his grave in the cattle kraal half-way up the hill, and where, at night, sacrifices and prayers are still offered. *Moroa-Sekwati* is still an honoured title.

Sekwati, flying from the Zulus, crossed the Olifants River with a considerable remnant of Tulare's men and women into Zoutpansberg, first to Mapahlele's Kraal, south of Pietersburg. He did not stay there long, but went to Botlokoa, to the north of Pietersburg. There he said to the Chief, "Tell me the names of all kraals which are inimical to you. I shall fight with them and set food for the road." In this way he went first to Boroka in the Ba-Mafefera (near Haenertsburg): There he settled for some time, and commencing raids round about, he got large quantities of cattle. He gave part of this loot to Mamohlatlo, widow of Malekut, and to her young son Tulare, who was of the same age as Sekukuni. This woman, however, grumbled about the cattle, saying, "You do not give me enough." Sekwati, displeased at this, went back to Botlokoa. From there he went to Ganana (Blauwberg), where he found a white man (the first Boer), Kadisha, near the great Zoutpan. Sekwati drove the people of Ganana from the salt-pan and they commenced to fight him. Sekwati was victorious. Kadisha was a friend of Sekwati, and went with him on many of his raids. Kadisha had no gun, but fought with bows and arrows. He had no white wife, but several black ones—in fact he was then Paramount Native Chief there, notwithstanding his white colour. Then Sekwati crossed the Limpopo River and went to Bokalaota (a Bakgalaka tribe like Mapela, near Piet-Potgieters Rust) and took many cattle kraals away, the

\* See this volume p. 98.



owners being afraid of fighting him. Kadisha, on this occasion, did not go with him. On his way back Mosilikatse's men took the cattle from him. Sekwati, avoiding a fight, fled. The other remnant of Tulare's Bapedi with Malekut's widow and son, also went from place to place to seek food and cattle. The Ba-Mapela and Ba-Mokopane, together with Magakal, attacked and killed them all. Sekwati now wished to go back to Sekukuni-land. He had no cattle, but many goats, taken from outlying kraals of the Bakgalakas. He passed Moletlane and came to the Olifants River opposite Magalie. The Olifants River was full. He cried across the river to Magalie's men to inform him when the river was down, as his camp was some distance from the river, at the hill Sepitsi. When he was there the Ba-Moletlane said to their Chief Zebediele, "Let us kill Sekwati." The Chief objected, saying, "Let him cross. He will assist us against the Mokoni-Marangrang, who always trouble us." As soon as the river was down he crossed and settled at Magalie's, who were friendly and welcomed him. At that time, under the Mokoni-Marangrang (whose head kraal was near Rietfontein, Dwars River), Legadimani of Magakal was the next powerful Chief here, and ruled as far as Magalies. Molamosu, father of Legadimane, when at his cattle-kraal at Waterkop, was murdered by Marangrang. When Legadimani greeted Sekwati, the latter called him a coward for not fighting Marangrang; and when Legadimani said, "He is too powerful," Sekwati answered that he would soon finish him. But before he did this there arose a quarrel between him and Legadimani, who was then at Mpanama's Location, and, afraid of being killed, fled across the Olifants River to Matabata (Molepo River). Shortly after, Marangrang—to whom Sekwati had sent some beads as a sign of friendship—which, however, did not deceive the latter with regard to Sekwati's real feelings—went with an *impi* to raid the Ba-Mapahlele. He went far round the other side of Pokwani. There he found that some men of Matlala had killed a giraffe, and he not only took this, but also killed the hunters, of whom one escaped. The Chief of Matlala (Kotola Maseramule) sent at once to Sekwati, saying, "Here is your Mokoni, but I do not know where he is going to." Marangrang crossed the river high up, came down the other side, and slept at the hill Sepitsi. Meanwhile Sekwati had sent to Mapahlela to say, "Be not afraid. The Mokoni comes. Kill him." The Ba-Mapahlela fought bravely in the flat and killed Marangrang. They took the shield of Marangrang, gave it to Magabutle, Sekwati's messenger, to show him that they had killed him. The man came late in the night, and at once during that same night Sekwati blew his war horns (phalafala—sable antelope horn) and sent messengers to all kraals with orders for the men to gather and go with him to destroy the capital of Marangrang. When he came there, however, he did not burn the kraal, but only looted a great many cattle and went home with the first cattle round about. Kabu, who had previously been with Marangrang, now

Zebediele's

Adriaans help

Went to Rietfontein  
on Crocodile

Kgabo

crossed Steelpoort and settled at Magnet Heights. Many of Sekwati's people were tired of his rule, so they left and settled with Kabu. Sekwati at once took up arms and went to fight Kabu. Kabu and his men fled into the Lolu above Seopela (Schoonoord). Sekwati camped at Schoonoord, made many big fires to deceive the enemy (as Frederick II, of Prussia once did), left early in the night, and marched all night through to Pa'hla (Mooifontein). Kabu next morning took this as a sign that Sekwati was afraid and followed him. Sekwati camped at a spruit, a little distance from Pa'hla's kraal. Kabu came before sunrise and attacked the Ba-Pa'hla while they were still asleep and suspected nothing. As soon as Sekwati heard the noise and shouts, he attacked the Ba-Kabu from behind and killed them, together with their auxiliaries, the old Makgema cannibals, many Bakonis and Mapulanas. He captured Kabu, but did not kill him. Kabu, however, fled away to Ohrigstad. While there he allied himself with Legadimani (Magakal), who gave Kabu a wife. Sekwati now asked Kabu to raid the Ba-Marabe (Marabastad, otherwise Pietersburg). They went. The Ba-Marabi not only drove them off, but killed them all. Both Kabu and Legadimani were amongst the slain. Then Sekwati went and looted all the cattle of Magakal.

After this there came an *impi* of the Swazis (under Somo-tobi, father of Umsutu, grandfather of Shopean), and attacked Sekwati, but they were driven off.

Then came a Zulu *impi*, sent by Panda, from Zululand. They were nearly successful in their attack, but could not manage the rocky hill (Phiring). After they left, Sekwati sent a messenger, Mangakane, with ostrich-feathers and skins of the tshipa (much prized by the Zulus) as peace offering. When this messenger arrived at Panda's, his mother mocked them because of the strange coverings round their loins. Panda thanked them and sent word: "That is all right now between us, but Sekwati must not sleep when the dogs bark. I am not the only enemy." He also sent some Zulus back with the messenger, to whom Sekwati gave some cattle as a gift to Panda. From there until lately the Bapedi from time to time sent tribute and so kept up the old good feeling between them.

Now came the first rumour about white men (the Boers).\* Some Boers with Ntere'ke (Hendrik Potgieter), coming from Waterberg, called Sekwati to the drift at the Olifants River (at MolaLegi's, Mathebe's). Sekwati went with all his men, with elephant tusks and some goats and sheep as a present. The Boers were glad to see him, and said, "Let us be friends." Then they passed over Magnet Heights to Ohrigstad, where they settled. They often came to hunt elephants together with Sekwati's men.

Afterwards Hendrik Potgieter begged a commando from

\* On first seeing white faces, the people said, "Ki Tulare, o tsogile": (It is Tulare; he has come up again). Because he also was very light in colour.

*Kyaku*

*Ngoaritema*

*Mafise the father of Legadimani  
Umsutu  
subsequently fled from Swaziland to Sekhukuni & settled here.*

*in Magakal location*

*These Zulus were used after Sekwati's loss were after Mafisichaka*

*Molalegi's not far from Boiv (Dike)*



Sekwati to raid the Ba-Moletshi (Zoutpansberg). Sekwati personally went with him and a big *impi*. They killed Moletshi's men and took a very large number of cattle-herds, small stock, and also women and children. After the fight, when the Bapedi were killing and eating the captured goats and sheep, Kadisha told Potgieter: "You do not know these men of Sekwati. I know them. You had better turn round and kill them also at once." Potgieter agreed to this. He called Sekwati alone to his camp, and turned round with all his Boers to the mass of Sekwati's warriors, standing only fifty yards away, and fired at them. They fled. The Boers on horseback rode after them and brought them back again. When Sekwati complained, they answered: "We did this because you were killing so many goats. Although you have taken the goats you ought to have brought them to us." The Ba-Mpahlele, Ba-Nkoane, Ba-Mpanama suffered most by this onslaught. The Boers now took all the clothes (pieces of thin cloth, bought by the people from wandering Makoapa from Delagoa Bay) and skins, but left the arms and shields. Now Sekwati sent all the auxiliaries home, remaining only with his own men. Then the Boers said: "All the men of Sekwati must go home, but Sekwati must remain with us." So Sekwati sent them home with young Sekukuni, also with some cattle and goats which the Boers gave him. A few days later he went home, too. The Boers also went home. Later they left Ohrigstad and went to settle near Mokopane (Piet Potgieter's Rust). From there they went together in a big commando of all native tribes (except Mapahlele) and came to attack Sekwati at Magalies. At first they were able to get up the hill of the stronghold to the top. But at the last strong enclosure the Bapedi drove them out and down again. The Bapedi also had guns from Moshoes, Basutoland. The Boers surrounded the hill, keeping the Bapedi from the water. They had been joined by a second detachment of Boers from Lydenburg. One day they cried out, "The women may come and fetch water." But when these came the Boers shot some of them; others had succeeded in going back with water. The cattle on the hill had been dying from hunger and thirst. The people sucked the stomachs of these. One night Sekukuni, with the young men and girls, went down, drove in the Boer outposts and brought water up. After that the Boers no longer put their night outposts near the water, and so the Bapedis had enough water. A party of Boers then went round to Lolu as far as Magakal, across the Olifants River, and took many herds of cattle. As soon as these arrived the Boers left, one commando for Zoutpansberg, the other for Lydenburg.

After this Sekwati sent a peace-offering of elephant tusks to Hendrik Potgieter, but found that the latter had just died—all the women were wearing black.

Sekwati then left Magalies and went over the Lolu to settle on the Hill Mosigo, which was full of caves. There he was left undisturbed until he died in 1861.

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