

Archival Mapping of the Phongolo-Thukela region: A case study of the Hlubi, Mthethwa, Ndwandwe and Qwabe territories during the nineteenth century

By Steven Kotze, Five Hundred Year Archive (FHYA) (UCT)

Amafa Institute African History and Heritage Public Seminar Series

29 August 2024

Abstract

In the last three years, APC researchers working on the history of southern Africa in eras immediately before European colonialism have been developing approaches which use material concerning space, landscape, topography and geography in new ways, with exciting results. Meanwhile, FHYA researchers exploring the affordances of archiving digitally have worried at archival conventions built into open-access archive software which use ethnographic conventions that allocate the primary geographic reference to often distant collecting institutions. These conventions give prominence to records and provenance of material culture, typically indicated in terms of ethnic attribution, itself often teleological and generalised. Such archival processes fail to recognize the wide range of possible geographic references any item may have, and the significance of any items' movement through space as well as time.

The current approaches being developed by historians suggest new avenues for the organisation of spatial material in relation to an online archive. This paper discusses such avenues. Methods and practice which obtain geo-spatial references for sites from a variety of sources are used to locate coordinates for these sites on digital mapping software, which in turn allows for building date and place information on the FHYA's experimental online archive, [EMANDULO](#) in new ways. Among the affordances that result is the capacity to consider spatiality beyond colonial boundaries and names that were imposed during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The paper lays out the FHYA critique of the archival conventions, introduces a case study involving the new historical approaches to spatial information, and discusses a range of digital strategies and interventions for archiving differently online. These novel interventions make it possible to research the dynamics of a changing history of space – the shaping and re-shaping of space over time - and its significance for how we think about space in the remote past.

Paper context

This paper forms part of the research output of the FHYA and is drawn from work I have done for an online archival curation on amaHlubi that was launched on 11 December 2023.

<http://emandulo.apc.uct.ac.za/cgi-bin/view/Presentations/convening-the-hlubi-archive.zip/>

The paper also forms part of a draft PhD proposal.

Archival Mapping of the Phongolo-Thukela region

A case study of the Hlubi, Mthethwa, Ndwandwe and Qwabe territories during the nineteenth century

Steven Kotze, Five Hundred Year Archive (FHYA) (UCT)

Amafa Institute African History and Heritage Public Seminar Series

29 August 2024

Introduction

Since the publication of *Refiguring the Archive* (Hamilton et. al. 2002), a now well-established body of work has raised critical questions about the configuring of archive (Hamilton 2017: 347). A key element of this critique of archives is that “– all archive – every archive is figured” (Hamilton et al. 2002: 7). In the South African context, archives were, for the most part, convened in the service of colonial and apartheid bureaucratic objectives that assigned certain documents a privileged status above other categories of records, or objects deemed ethnological or ethnographic in nature. In the twentieth century, museums with collections of ethnographic material took an approach towards material culture that saw such items arranged based on ethnic categorisations of that era. The primary focus for such institutions was on broad stylistic criteria used to label items as “Zulu”, “Hlubi”, or “Mfengu”, for example, frequently without complete details of provenance and original dates of manufacture (Hamilton & McNulty 2022: 138). Occasionally, items were erroneously classified according to the principles of this very system. It has been widely demonstrated how materials were sorted based on the medium of their manufacture, with objects being placed in ethnographic or natural history museums, while photographs, films, and notes were placed in archives, sometimes within the same institution as the associated objects, but frequently in separate locations. Such divisions and dispersals contributed to the erosion of critical and specific contextual information related to these materials.

Scholars within the FHYA have raised awareness of the need to re-curate collections of material culture previously categorised as ethnographic. While such collections can be used as sources, and treated as a kind of archive, their framing in their home institutions is not archival. The FHYA argues for their re-curation in terms of a basic reframing as archive, and a going beyond archival framing to keep track of all the changes they undergo while in repositories and in the course of being re-curated. This involves, amongst other things, keeping track of sprawling sets of labels, captions and correspondence involved. (Hamilton

& Leibhammer 2014: 156). What the FHYA means by treating items as archival is has been spelt out by Hamilton and McNulty as going beyond simply applying the central archival premise of respect de fonds (Hamilton & McNulty 2022: 134). In practical terms, this flags the importance of geospatial references in archival sources, such as the accession registers and index cards pertinent to amaHlubi related items. By paying close attention to the place names of where the items were collected, it is possible to relate items more closely to one another in terms of materials used and style of construction or reconstruct the objects biography both before and after it was collected.

This paper proposes that a vital part of the archival histories required of these materials should include the relevant spatial information pertaining to objects in such collections, and that such spatial data forms part of the provenance information that has been frequently overlooked in the past. Intensive research, both using existing archival records and in the form of mapping, is required to correlate any available geospatial records associated with items of material culture and named sites from written sources onto digital mapping software such as QGIS or similar platforms. Here the FHYA has been casting a much wider net than is typical in this kind of historical research and identifying a range of unexpected sources for place information. These include published and archival texts, historical maps, heritage impact assessments for construction and infrastructure developments published online, texts and images posted on social media and websites, as well as field trips by researchers to verify elements of landscape identified in research, among others.

Hamilton and McNulty have recently argued that digital interventions can “reframe” a range of materials that have not previously been considered archive, stating,

reframing assists researchers in moving beyond legacy institutional and disciplinary conventions and categories. We pay attention to the capacity for digital interventions not only to effect reframing but simultaneously also to keep track of the earlier history, arrangement, and rearrangements of the materials. (Hamilton & McNulty 2022: 135)

The present paper was developed from one previously presented at an FHYA Research Development Workshop in November 2023 (Kotze 2023). In order to stimulate a discussion of unexpected new sources of information, their potential contribution to the archive in their own right, and of their archival affordances notably in reframing of ethnographic

collections, this paper primarily focuses on the curatorial project by the FHYA on archives relating to amaHlubi, which was launched in mid-December 2023, but expands the methodologies developed and used for that project to include sites associated with sakwaMthethwa, kwaNdwandwe and Qwabe country.

The [online archival curation of material related to amaHlubi](#) is part of the FHYA endeavour to unstitch colonial and apartheid-era tribal or ethnic categories by refiguring existing collections and presenting them in an accessible format or platform. The records, history, and indeed geography, of amaHlubi serves as an exemplar of change, movement and dispersal over a significant period, including expressions of identity that contain both dynamic and stable elements depending on the context, in contrast with defined notions of tribal territories, communal coherence and static ethnic identity promoted by administratively driven discourses during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The collections of documents assembled by FHYA researchers include recordings and transcripts of oral testimony, photographs, newspaper articles, unpublished manuscripts and books alongside items of material culture held by at least eight institutions. Quality of meta-data and supporting evidence varies considerably among the hundreds of examples assembled, depending on the approaches taken when the items were originally gathered. Overall, the KwaZulu-Natal Museum, Campbell Collections, McGregor Museum, Iziko and British Museum have maintained previous records and the institutional histories of collections, but formerly private collections (such as the Estelle Hamilton-Welsh collection at the University of Fort Hare (UFH) and Joan Broster collection at Walter Sisulu university (WSU)) were subject to regimes of erratic or non-existent background record keeping prior to their respective donations to these institutions.

Preparing the FHYA amaHlubi archival curation suggested new avenues for organisation of spatial material within the archive. I have benefitted enormously from working as part of the FHYA team, and the research I have conducted to create the archival maps discussed below forms part of an FHYA sub-project on mapping. From the outset, the project appreciated that a strong spatial element would form an integral part of the planned FHYA curation of amaHlubi archives due to of the wide dispersal of people who claim identity as amaHlubi. Although it was not known what form amaHlubi geospatial intervention would

take, some form of mapping was always anticipated. This “alertness to the possibilities of landscape, and of sites within landscapes, as historical materials” has been pointed out previously by Hamilton (2013: 19) and focused my attention on any details concerning documented geographic locations that might otherwise have gone unnoticed or received less attention. Foregrounding the spatial in new historical research soon generated two decisive methodologies for the FHYA project, which were designated as “fixing” and “tracing” respectively. The first refers to the results of posing the question, “using the available evidence, can I find the historical site of X or Y?” Once the coordinates or approximate locality of a place were established, I could fix or mark the position on the draft Google map. The second methodology was in turn the result of establishing or fixing several sites to thereby discern any important points of passage such as river crossings, defiles or mountain passes that were likely used on potential routes linking two or more fixed sites. It is important to recognize how these related approaches to space are themselves derived from the FHYA concept of reconvening archives previously dispersed by colonial collectors. By fixing coordinates or a locality for sites, the FHYA sub-project has restored spatial values for colonially dispersed archives of material culture and texts. In addition, identifying probable routes for travel or trade permits the tracing of how people move, circulate and spread over time. In the same way that fixing sites is an FHYA strategy to reconvene archivally dispersed geospatial information, tracing movement of individuals or communities in the landscape destabilizes previously held notions of geographically static ethnic identities. In the sub-project that these methods were developed from it furthermore highlighted aspects of amaHlubi history.

Historical context of the spatial differentiation among amaHlubi

Spanning 200 years and significant population movements across southern Africa, amaHlubi history includes an extensive geographic scope. Identifying a prior origin in the Lubombo mountains of eSwatini, the earliest events recounted in recorded amaHlubi oral accounts describe a migration to the upper reaches of the uMzinyathi river by the eighteenth century (Wright & Mason 1983: 2). This region offered variable grazing and agricultural opportunities but was rich in iron ore and wood for charcoal. Trade in iron goods, especially hoes, across the uKhahlamba passes into the highveld beyond was likely the source of prestige and wealth for the people of this region (Moffett et al. 2017).

By the early nineteenth century, under their leader Mthimkhulu kaBhungane, the amaHlubi experienced a devastating attack by the amaNgwane chiefdom, leading to the dispersion of their people. This event, known as izwekufa, resulted in the fragmentation of amaHlubi communities. Following Mthimkhulu's death, his descendants and other components of amaHlubi isizwe scattered widely: some fled as far south as the Kei River, others to the highveld while many were incorporated within the Zulu kingdom (Mabhonsa kaSidlayi, JSA2 1979: 13-14). Langalibalele kaMthimkhulu later became the amaHlubi leader but faced further challenges, including conflict with the Zulu king Mpande and in 1874, exile after resisting orders of colonial officials in Natal. Meanwhile, different offshoots of amaHlubi settled across a wide area, from the Zulu kingdom to East Griqualand, Herschel and beyond, showing the extensive nature of their diaspora following the 1819 upheaval.

New approaches to archiving space

Charged by the FHYA with the responsibility of archiving space for the amaHlubi curation, I created a comprehensive record of all references to named locations, including topographical features. This took the form of a table, in a text document, that documented the name of the site as well as any main historical figures associated with it, and a date, along with the title of the source and page reference for each specific location. During the preliminary research process, the FHYA sub-project created a first draft table of sites and references of more than 150 locations, although some of these were duplicates that recorded changes in orthography over time and other spelling variations. In parallel with the source list for locations, a working draft for a digital map was generated using Google Maps. The draft amaHlubi Google Map incorporated topographical features such as mountain ranges and water courses that were manually drawn onto the map, and specific sites indicated with a standard location marker. Using these two techniques, within a short space of time a catalogue and limited digital map of amaHlubi sites was produced from textual references.

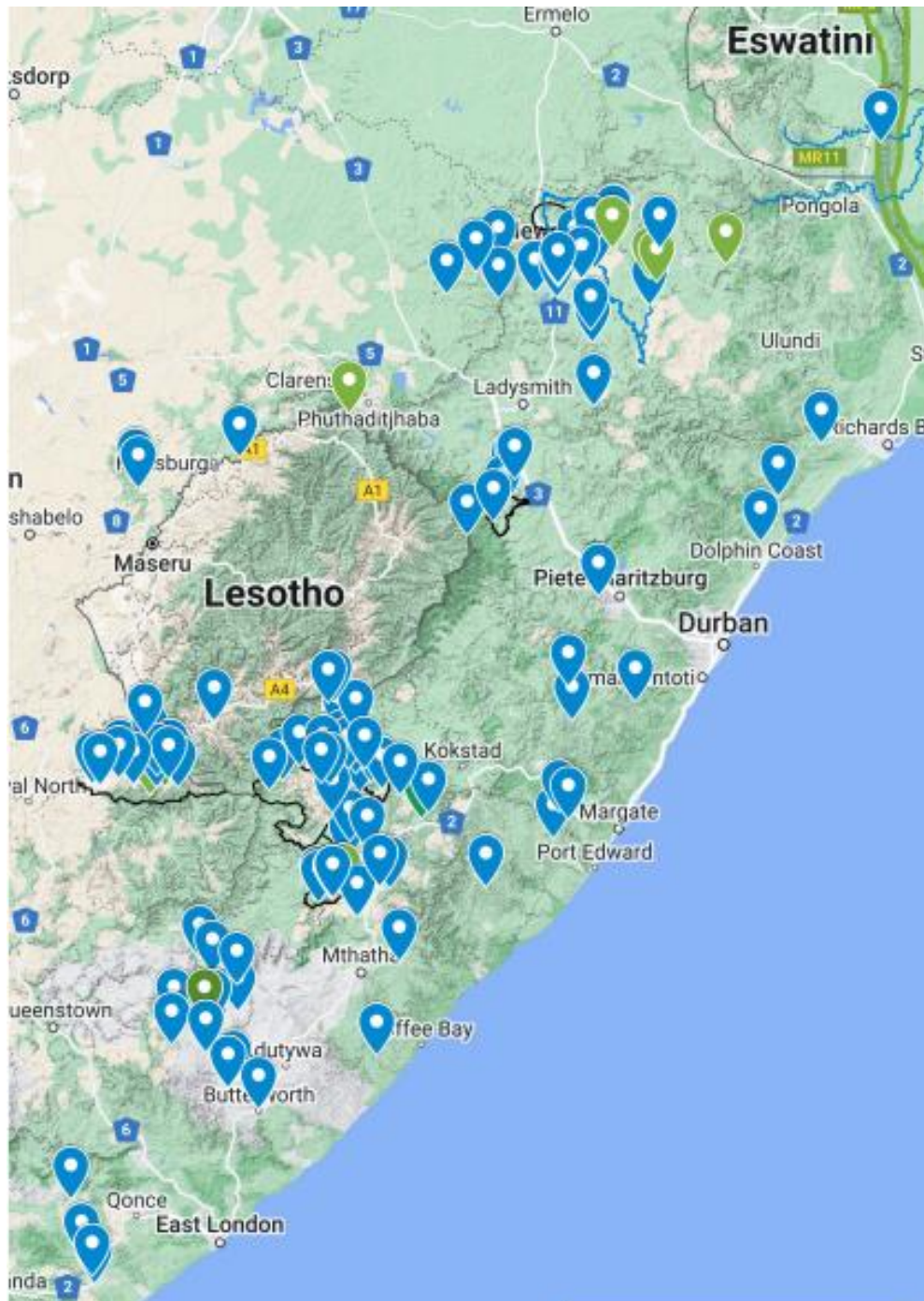


Fig. 1. Draft Google Map for FHYA amaHlubi archive

Previous research and collaboration with colleagues at the University of Fort Hare (UFH) and Walter Sisulu University (WSU) resulted in digital records (photographs and meta-data) for small collections of material culture associated with amaHlubi held by these two institutions. Only the UFH list contained any record of where the items originated, and although some of these indications of location were very broad, such as town names, the sites were included in the draft map (Fig. 1 above). Finally, in February 2023, FHYA organised a field trip to northern KZN with the purpose of visiting many of the key Hlubi

sites identified on the map to correlate the respective positions on the map with personal observations of the landscape and the locations in question. During this field trip, John Wright suggested that the process undertaken for archival mapping of amaHlubi sites should be repeated for sakwaMthethwa, kwaNdwande and Qwabe country. Due to time constraints though, these latter three mapping exercises would be initially limited to geospatial locations derived from drafts of current research by Hamilton and Wright, supplemented by additional sources where possible. It is this mapping exercise that has resulted in the supplementary set of maps that I will share in the Amafa Institute African History and Heritage seminar presentation.

Detailed research on the KwaZulu-Natal Museum (KZNM) amaHlubi collection was provided by Justine Wintjes, in which a series of location references emerged for material culture items in original accession documents that contained more accurate geographic information than those I had originally consulted. At the same time, I began to document the Iziko collection with the assistance of Lailah Hisham from that museum. There are considerable variations in the formats used for documenting locations in the Iziko meta-data records. The original accession tags, for example Fig. 2. below, often provides more geospatial detail than what is recorded for the same items on later transcriptions of the records (see Fig. 3).

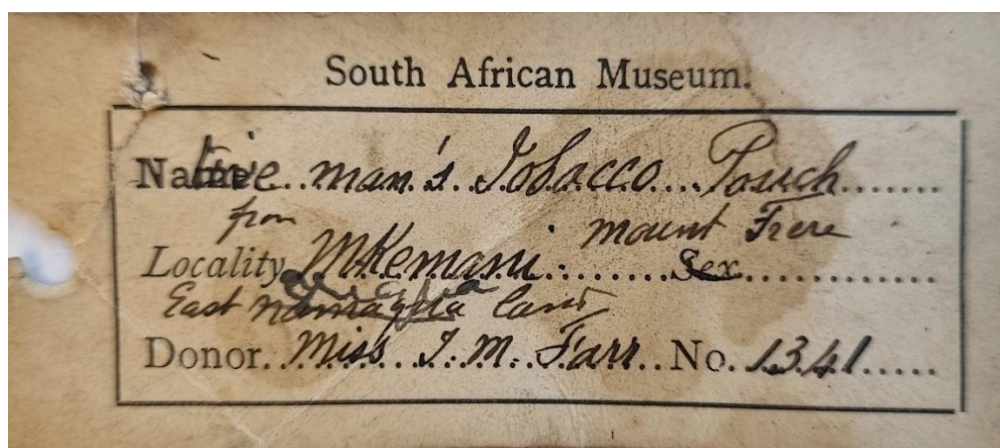


Fig. 2. S.A.M. 1341 (Iziko collection): Tobacco pouch, 1911; original accession tag.

Gathering all available information on geographic locations for amaHlubi materials in the Iziko collection allowed this to be added to the text tables of sources for the draft digital map. The work of transferring references for locations found in documentary sources to precise coordinates on a map is complex and involves several diverse strategies. In the first instance, close readings of published sources sometimes revealed an exact position on

either the current version of Google Maps or recent editions of 1: 50 000 survey maps available in digital format from the National Geo-spatial Information (NGI), which is part of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development. In these cases, a new map location was created and named in Google Maps, including a summary of the meta-data.

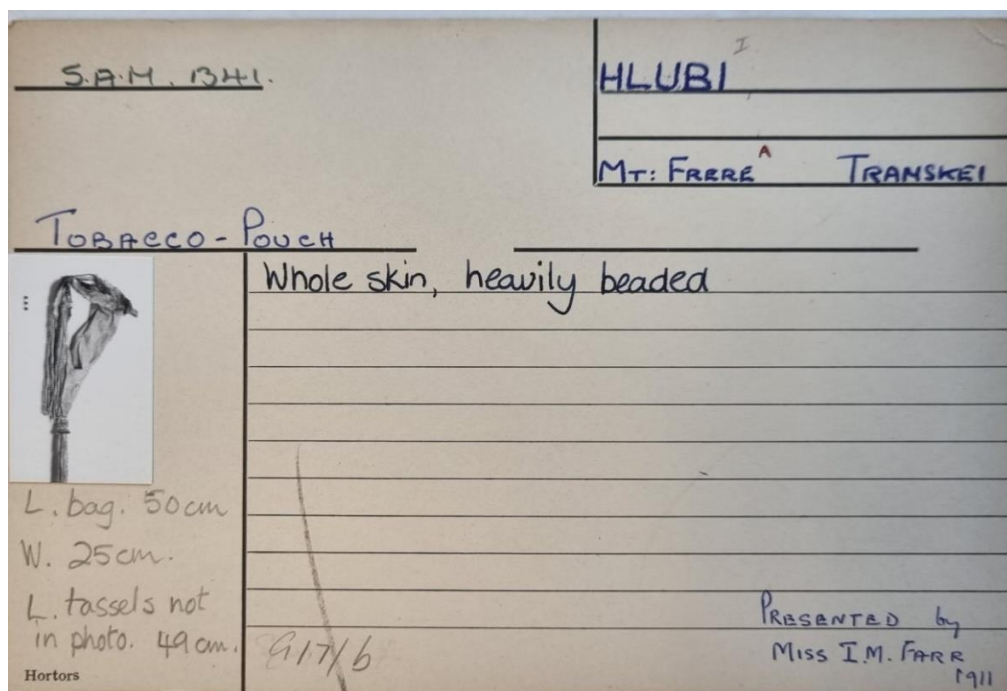


Fig. 3. S.A.M. 1341 (Iziko collection): Tobacco pouch, 1911; revised accession information.

Archival mapping techniques applied to the Phongolo-Thukela region

Instances of finding exact positions on older maps that could be transferred to digital maps were rare though and pinpointing more accurate coordinates with any precision usually required finding additional reference information. This applied particularly to sites outside the initial focus on amaHlubi history. The EMANDULO search function was a useful tool in this respect, as the name for a specific site often occurred in more than one document or text within the depot of the website. Due to both orthographic variation and non-standardised spelling of toponyms in these sources, innovative search techniques were required to locate specific named sites in the first place. One of the most productive has been to search for the noun “kraal”, which although an Afrikaans synonym for isibaya (cattle byre) was commonly used to indicate an umuzi (homestead) or ikhanda (military homestead) during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By using kraal as search proxy for umuzi or ikhanda, the names of imizi and amakhanda, as well as descriptions of

their respective locations were identified in digitised texts held by EMANDULO. What emerged, particularly in documented discussions between James Stuart and almost all the interlocutors he engaged with, was the valuable basis for reconstruction of a draft decolonial map of the Phongolo-Thukela region in the nineteenth century.

Among the most productive resources for archival mapping on EMANDULO are UCT held copies of military maps prepared during the British invasion of the Zulu kingdom, where original names of topographical features are preserved. A key function of such maps is the dissemination of military intelligence for troop dispositions or logistics, and although spellings and orthography are non-standard, these early maps of the region accurately record many mountains, hills and watercourses using African names. In addition, and equally significant, are examples of African toponyms which have been effaced on contemporary maps and GIS databases, but which are recorded on the earliest military maps and the detailed surveys conducted in the former Zulu kingdom culminating in the 1902 Zululand Lands Delimitation Commission. In many cases very important geospatial information has been hidden in plain sight on these older maps but was subsequently erased during later editions of twentieth century cartographic interpretations that ignored African toponyms in favour of those introduced and used by white landowners and cartographers.

The legal requirement for Heritage Impact Assessments to be conducted prior to any proposed development in South Africa since 1999 (National Heritage Resources Act, No. 25 of 1999) has vastly increased the number of published archaeological surveys, which include all evidence of graves and abandoned homesteads sites within any proposed development. Many of these are available online, and occur in the search results for named sites, allowing for confirmation of precise locations in many cases. If the online search for coordinates proved unsuccessful despite using a combination of the strategies described above, social media often proved a useful last resort. Photographs tagged with references to locations of interest often provide clues for where to search more carefully for additional information, and frequently mention historic sites which remain significant to communities in the present day. Such references to sites of importance, including celebratory social media selfies next to markers and memorials, indicates that knowledge of, and the commemorating of

symbolic or spiritual sites remains a commonplace activity. Although Google Maps usually does not include African names of landforms such as mountains or hills, other online mapping sites often do. A website that proved useful in this regard is PeakVisor (<https://peakvisor.com/>), an outdoor navigation application used by hikers and mountaineers, which mainly uses isiZulu names for named peaks in the northern KZN region.

Affordances of archival mapping

FHYA researchers working on the history of southern Africa in eras immediately before European colonialism have begun to develop approaches which use materials concerning space, landscape, topography and geography in newly intensive ways. Among the important affordances of archiving space is collecting geospatial data that allows for the creation of a decolonial map of amaHlubi (or any other historical formations of the Phongolo-Thukela region), in other words a two-dimensional representation of landscape and space showing coordinates or localities relevant to decolonial maps of this region. While the names of many of these coordinates are known and are recorded in many of the sources described above, they are not commonly recorded or shown on maps or in relation to one another. Thus, the process of “surfacing” sites previously effaced from colonial-era or later maps creates a clearer image of where in the landscape power bases of these political formations were situated at various points in time, as well as any topographical benefits or constraints they might have experienced. This has allowed the creation of draft forms of searchable digital maps that more accurately locate sites associated with events, people and objects, as described in our case study below. A facility being developed will link sites on the digital map to the sources which reference those places, and when a cursor is held over the marker a drop-down menu will offer the viewer live links to the sources.

A draft Google Map of the Phongolo-Thukela region, containing hundreds of place markers for named sites and topographical features, suggests the range of broad affordances that result from archiving space with a decolonial approach. Without the benefit of coordinates or approximate positions for any specific great place (koMkhulu?) or imizi of amakhosi and other leaders of sakwaMthethwa or kwaNdwandwe, for example, any consideration of relationships between individuals or the formations they led remains a difficult task. Spatial

considerations of relationships encompass the topography of mountain ranges and the sites of passes, or large rivers and their crossings, all of which confine the movement of people, cattle and goods to a limited number of obligatory passages within a network of travel for a specific region. Geographers working in other settings have used mapping software to plot the likely routes of these kinds of transit networks based on Least Cost Path algorithms (Hertzog 2014), a form of analysis not yet fully deployed in our research. Combining these and other strategies reveals the social and political lie of the land in finer detail than before, allowing for micro-analysis of water resources, soil quality and grazing potential, in addition to courses of travel, in the immediate proximity of various leaders at different times. The collective value of diverse landscape features produces a variegated heat map, showing accumulation or lack thereof, for such factors in very specific detail. This approach stands in contrast to previous versions of maps for amaHlubi and other formations in the region at the turn of the nineteenth century, which have used “fuzzy shading” showing where concentrations of amaHlubi lived for example (Fig. 3. below is an example of this type of map from Wikipedia). In contrast though, using archival sources, including the geospatial references derived from a wide spectrum of research material to document space immediately produced a cartographic visualisation of specific areas in the Phongolo-Thukela region since the nineteenth century, including distances between specific sites.

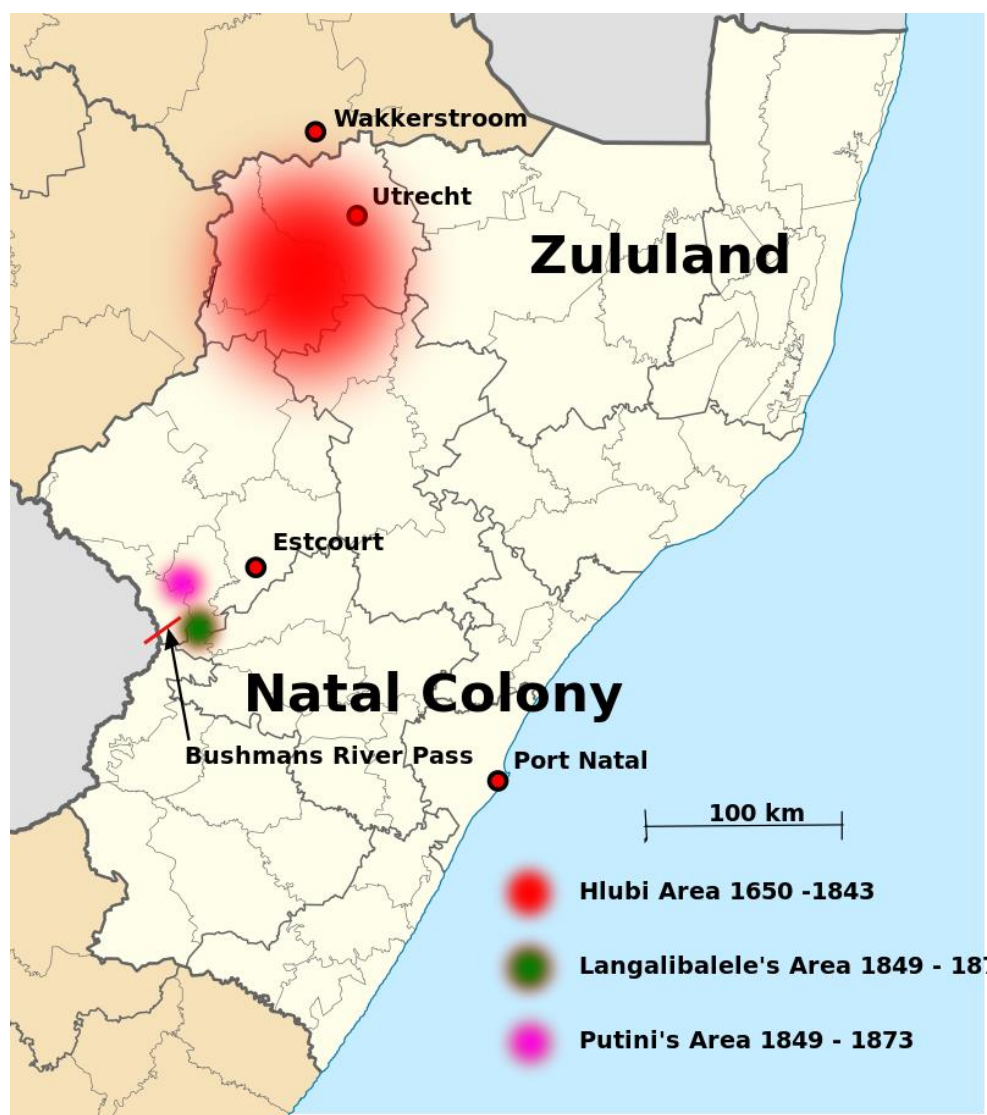


Fig. 4: Wikipedia map of Hlubi territory

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Langalibalele#/media/File:Map_Langalibalele.svg)

Archival mapping of Mthethwa, Ndwandwe and Qwabe territories

The methods and insight first gained from mapping archival sources of amaHlubi were essential in the developing maps of other areas and political formations in the Phongolo-Thukela region. In the case of sakwaMthethwa, between iMfolozi emhlope and iMfolozi emnyama, and specifically south of the confluence of these two rivers to the uMhlatuze river, I have relied on the research and maps of Absalom Mthethwa's 1995 dissertation (University of Zululand), as well as an archaeological research report submitted to Amafa (Pelser & van der Walt 2013) and John Daniel's important 1973 article on mapping and geography in pre-Shakan Zululand. Although some key Mthethwa sites are now located

within the boundary of the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi nature reserve, the majority of historic locations remain within sakwaMthethwa territory and were pointed out to Absalom Mthethwa by elders within the community in order to be documented in his study. The respective cases of kwaNdwandwe and Qwabe country are more complicated as a result of movements of the chiefly houses out of the regions they originally occupied and ruled over. Many of the Qwabe sites on the draft map were identified from the testimony of Mmeni kaNguluzane, who used locations for other amakhanda subsequently built by the Zulu kings as reference points. For example, in the case below of eMthandeni, the ikhanda / koMkhulu of Phakatwayo kaKhondlo,

Kangela (Dingana's kraal) was built in Pakatwayo's district near Mandawe hill at the Emtilombo (stream). This kraal was built on the former site of Emtandeni. The Emtandeni was Pakatwayo's ikanda. P. came from oDwini (Kondhlo's main kraal) and built his main kraal at Emtandeni. Kangela was in good view of Maqwakazi hill.

(Mmemi kaNguluzane, JSA3, p 259)

Descriptions of where the main Qwabe imizi were situated are also available in *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (1929), by A. T. Bryant and research maps prepared by George Chadwick and Tony Cubbins, which have been shared with EMANDULO and used to identify sites. Due to the re-use of names or relocation of chiefly residences, some of the names occur in multiple positions depending on the sources used, which combine to serve as a heat map of sorts (a 2-dimensional data visualisation on the map that represents the concentration of specific sites, even if they are possibly repetitions). Finally, there are topographical features preserved in the landscape and documented on Google Maps, such as the Khondlo spring and kwaHlokohloko ridge that are significant to Qwabe history. Regarding the former, it is a short watercourse of approximately 5km running north to join the Vuma stream on the northern slopes of eNtumeni mountain and is associated with the umuzi of Khondlo kaMncinci (possibly oDwini?). kwaHlokohloko was the site of an important Qwabe defeat under Phakatwayo kaKhondlo at the hands of the Shaka kaSenzangakhona's Zulu (Mmemi kaNguluzane, JSA3, p 264). Although the hill is not recorded on contemporary online maps, the name occurs in a heritage impact assessment submitted by Umlando: Archaeological Surveys and Heritage Management for a water reticulation project near Eshowe (Anderson 2022), which indicated an approximate locality slightly north of the

uMlalazi River which was then confirmed as a named peak or topographical prominence by searching on the peakvisor.com website.

As with the Qwabe examples outlined above, many important places associated with kwaNdwandwe history proved tricky to identify precisely as they have been effaced not only by colonial and apartheid cartographic history, but also by the practice of reusing sites of significant imizi during the period of the Zulu kingdom. As demonstrated above, the testimony of interlocutors who spoke with James Stuart often permitted the sites of Ndwandwe imizi to be inferred from oblique references, such as those made by Luzipo kaNomageje when describing the imizi of Zwide kaLanga and other kwaNdwandwe sites,

Zwide's main kraal was Emgazini; it was below Isigwegwe hill, where Ziweddu [kaMpande] is now living. Zwide's other kraals were Esikwitshini, near Tatiyana, and KwaDhlovunga (where Ntombaze lived) at eTokazi hill. Tatiyana are dongas near where Zwide caught Dingiswayo. (Luzipo kaNomageje, JSA1, p 354)

Thus in the case of Zwide's eMgazini ikhanda, its former position was related both by the setting on esiGwegweni hill which allowed control over traffic along the iVuna River valley from the iMfolozi emnyama drift; as well as to the umuzi of Ziweddu kaMpande which later supplanted it. Popular belief asserts that a large umganu tree (*Sclerocarya birrea*) growing inside a courtyard in central Nongoma was used by Zwide as a meeting place at his kwaNongoma umuzi and is known locally as "[Zwide's Tree](#)". Academic articles and archaeological reports have been used to verify the locations of kwaDlovunga of Ntombazi (Daniel 1973) while another important site close to the Phongolo River, named Phakamisa after a nearby hill was documented in maps and diagrams prepared by Ronette Engela (EMANDULO SWOHP collection). A FHYA field trip to the area in 2023 subsequently confirmed the importance of the Ndwandwe Phakamisa locale to a narrow obligatory passage through the hills to a nearby Phongolo River drift situated at the end of a deep gorge, providing access to trade routes through the Lubombo Mountains. Another strategy I have developed is using school names on Google maps, which sometimes preserve the evidence of older names or locations of significant sites close by. This suggests very strongly how local historical and spatial knowledge has persisted and is valued in local communities. School names, in cases of reference to an historic site nearby, reflects an awareness or perhaps even an obvious fact that is deployed in naming the school. The brief set of

examples above are meant to illustrate the range of sources that FHYA adopted in the process of archival mapping.

Conclusion

Archival mapping employs methods and practice which obtain geo-spatial references for sites from a variety of sources are used to locate coordinates, or, in some cases approximate locations for these sites on digital mapping software. This process allows FHYA to build date and place information on EMANDULO in new ways. Among the affordances that result is the capacity to consider spatiality beyond colonial boundaries and names that were imposed during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The paper lays out the FHYA critique of the archival conventions, introduces a case study involving the new historical approaches to spatial information, and inaugurates discussion of digital spatial strategies and interventions for archiving differently online. These novel interventions make it possible to research the dynamics of a changing history of space – the shaping and re-shaping of space over time – and its significance for how we think about space in the remote past. As David Glassberg has observed, “Historical consciousness and place consciousness are inextricably intertwined. We attach histories to places, and the environmental value attached to a place comes largely from the memories and historical associations we have with it” (Glassberg 1996: 17). In the southern African context though, such place consciousness has rarely been connected directly to archival sources even if it persists among communities where historical sites are located or when the relevant geospatial information is documented and available.

When the archive is reframed spatially, we open the door to seeing new things, like the significance of uKhahlamba mountain passes near the headwaters of the iNgagane river, or to suggest a trade route along a potential itinerary for the eighteen-day journey from the royal ikhanda of kwaNobamba (emaKhosini) to Delagoa Bay (Maputo) undertaken and documented by two travellers in March 1829. This suggests ways of researching dynamics of a changing history of space, the shaping and reshaping of space over time – and its significance for how we think about space in the remote past. This helps develop new thinking about certain specific resources in the Phongolo-Thukela region such as the pockets of grazing, and the large rivers or wetlands, as well as sources of wood for charcoal and iron deposits. It positions us to see the mountainous passes through the escarpment as

something of an advantage rather than a simple barrier, in the case of those passes that form something of a trade route leading from the iNgangane River region to the Batlokoa settlement of Nkoe just beyond the escarpment. It alerts us further to the complex issue of what are “boundaries” and “territories” in this context and how such concepts could be navigated during the period under consideration.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, G. (2022). Heritage Impact Assessment of the KwaHlokoHloko sub-supply area, Phase 2. Meerensee: Umlando: Archaeological Surveys and Heritage Management
- Beinart, W. (1981). Conflict in Qumbu: rural consciousness, ethnicity and violence in the colonial Transkei, 1880–1913. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 8(1), 94-122.
- Beinart, W., & Bundy, C. (1987). *Hidden struggles in rural South Africa: politics & popular movements in the Transkei & Eastern Cape, 1890-1930* (No. 40). Univ of California Press.
- Daniel, J. M. (1973). A geographical study of pre-Shakan Zululand. *South African Geographical Journal*, 55(1), 23-31.
- Ellenberger, D. F. (Ed.). (1912). *History of the Basuto, Ancient and Modern, translated by J. C. McGregor*. London: Caxton publishing Company.
- Glassberg, D. (1996). Presenting history to the public: The study of memory and the uses of the past. *The Public Historian* 18(2), 7-23.
- Hamilton, C. et al. (Eds). (2002). *Refiguring the archive*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.
- Hamilton, C. (2013). Forged and continually refashioned in the crucible of ongoing social and political life: archives and custodial practices as subjects of enquiry. *South African Historical Journal*, 65(1), 1-22.
- Hamilton, C. (2017). The long southern African past: enfolded time and the challenges of archive. *Social Dynamics*, 43(3), 338-357.
- Hamilton, C. & Leibhammer, N. (2014). Salutes, Labels and Other Archival Artefacts. C. Hamilton & P. Skotnes (Eds), *Uncertain Curature: In and out of the archive*. Cape Town: Jacana Media, 155-188.
- Hamilton, C. & Leibhammer, N. (Eds). (2016). *Tribing and Untribing the Archive: Identity and the Material Record in Southern KwaZulu-Natal in the Late Independent and Colonial Periods*. Scottsville: UKZN Press.
- Hamilton, C., & McNulty, G. (2022). Refiguring the archive for eras before writing: digital interventions, affordances and research futures. *History in Africa*, 49, 131-157.
- Hamilton, C. & Wright, J. B. (in prep). *Politics and Identity*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Herzog, I. (2014). Least-cost paths—some methodological issues. *Internet Archaeology*, 36(10.11141).
- Kotze, S. (2023). Archiving space. Unpublished APC Research development workshop paper, UCT.
- Lamla, C. M. (2013). The descendants of Mthimkhulu I. *Oral history: Representing the hidden, the untold and the veiled*, 19.
- Louw, J. (1964). *Catalogue of the Estelle Hamilton-Welsh Collection: Housed in the FS Malan Museum*. Fort Hare University Press.
- Millar, L. (2002). The death of fonds and the resurrection of provenance: Archival context in space and time. *Archivaria* 53, 1-15.
- Moffett, A. J., Maggs, T., & van Schalkwyk, J. (2017). Breaking ground: hoes in precolonial South Africa—typology, medium of exchange and symbolic value. *African Archaeological Review*, 34, 1-20.
- Morrow, S. (1996). ‘The things they have made will live forever’: the Estelle Hamilton-Welsh collection in the FS Malan Museum, University of Fort Hare. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 22(2), 271-285.
- Mqhayi, S. E. K. (1927). Nzulu Lwazi, U Bhungane. *Umteteli waBantu*, 5 November 1927, 7.

- National Heritage Resource Act. (1999). *Government Gazette*, vol. 406, No. 19974: Cape Town.
- Mthethwa, A. M. (1995). *The history of abakwaMthethwa*. Unpublished BA Hons. dissertation, University of Zululand.
- Pelser, A. J. & van der Walt, J. (2013). A report on the archaeological test excavations at Chief Dingiswayo's homestead site (Oyengweni). Pietermaritzburg: Amafa AkwaZulu-Natali.
- Sanders, P. B. (1969). Sekonyela and Moshweshwe: Failure and Success in the Aftermath of van Warmelo, N. J. (1935). *A preliminary survey of the Bantu tribes of South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printer, 131.
- Webb, C. de B. & Wright, J.B. (Eds). (1976-2014). *The James Stuart Archive of recorded oral evidence relating to the history of the Zulu and neighbouring peoples, Volumes 1-6*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.
- Webb, C. de B. & Wright, J.B. (Eds). (1976). *Vol. 1, Statement of Luzipo kaNomageje*, 354-357.
- Webb, C. de B. & Wright, J.B. (Eds). (1982). *Vol. 3, Statement of Mabhonsa kaSidlayi*, 11-41.
- Webb, C. de B. & Wright, J.B. (Eds). (1982). *Vol. 3, Statement of Mmemi kaNguluzane*, 238-283.
- Webb, C. de B. & Wright, J.B. (Eds). (2001). *Vol. 5, Statement of Sivivi kaMaqungo*, 367-383.
- Wright, J. B. & Mason, A. (1983). *The Hlubi Kingdom in Zululand-Natal*. Ladysmith: Ladysmith Historical Society.