

Book Reviews and Notices

THE BLACK PEOPLE and whence they came. A Zulu View

by Magma M. Fuze. Translated by H.C. Lugg. Edited by A.T. Cope.

(Published jointly by the University of Natal Press and the Killie Campbell Africana Library. Translation Series Number 1, 1979.)

This book was written at the turn of the century. When it was first published in 1922 it was the first major work ever written in Zulu by a native speaker of the language. It was conceived and written by Magma M. Fuze, son of Magwaza kaMatomela of the Fuze clan of the Ngcobo chiefdom, because, as he put it,

‘It will be a good thing if even in the future our children gain knowledge about their past, rather than remain ignorant and stupid like the *siphumamangati* eagle.’

Fuze’s father was a subject of Chief Ngoza of the Majozi clan which was located at Table Mountain, not far from Pietermaritzburg. In 1856 Fuze left his people to live at Ekukhanyeni, Bishop Colenso’s mission station, which was situated adjacent to the episcopal residence at Bishopstowe. Bishopstowe, which was about ten kilometres from Pietermaritzburg, was ideally situated to serve as a meeting place between the world of the black people and that of the white. Fuze was one of the first pupils of a school established by Colenso for the education of the children of all important black people in Natal. By Colenso’s estimation he was about twelve years of age when he came to the school. He was baptised on Easter Sunday in 1859 and was trained as a compositor on the mission printing press. He remained at Ekukhanyeni for thirty years and more, and maintained a lifelong contact with the Colenso family.

Ekukhanyeni and Bishopstowe brought Fuze into contact with a wider world. The most notable people of the day, black and white, colonists, Zulus and people from overseas visited there. It was there that the great issues of the day such as evolution were discussed. It was there that intellectual currents emanating from England fused with the practical problems of translating the Bible into Zulu. The interaction of intellectual developments in England such as Sir Charles Lyell’s revelation of the immense antiquity of man through his geological work, and the close questioning of ‘intelligent Zulus’ such as William Ngidi and Fuze on matters such as the capacity of Noah’s ark, launched Colenso on his controversial course of biblical criticism. The atmosphere of the mission station was one of curiosity, of healthy scepticism, of examining and discussing whatever issues advanced scientific knowledge, however uncomfortable they might be in terms of traditional religious teaching, of thinking about them and coming to conclusions, for Colenso revered Truth and would tolerate no obstacles to the pursuit of Truth. Fuze himself asks in his book,

‘Why should the story not be true that the first person to be created was a baboon, and that in the course of time the baboons developed into humans such as us?’

Fuze successfully straddled the worlds of the traditional Zulu and the Christian convert, and the main interest of his book lies in the reflections of mind of a man who stood with equanimity at the forefront of a clash of cultures. In Mrs Colenso's view, his dress and manners as a printer would do credit to any Englishman of his rank in society. Yet he retained a profound respect for the customs and traditions of his people. This was not surprising for in Colenso he had a sympathetic teacher who did not confront traditional cultures head-on but rather sought out elements on which Christian concepts could be grafted and developed. Fuze records the customs of his people in the belief that a people became worthless when their customs were not observed. Yet the overlay of Christian morality is evident in his observations on some customs. With reference to songs sung by girls on attaining puberty he states,

'These puberty songs are very bad and disgusting, and refer to matters not spoken about by a well-mannered person and spoken about only by an evil-minded person with no sense of respect.'

He argues that these songs were composed as a warning both to those who had attained puberty and those who had not, to desist from 'evil', 'filthy acts' which if performed by a girl signified her worthlessness. Yet the actual object of those songs was to serve as a form of sex education in plain language. Although in many respects a pious Christian, Fuze himself had, by his own account to the Natal Native Affairs Commission of 1881-2, acquired four wives in accordance with the customs of his people and in contravention of Colenso's ban on the acquisition of additional wives by Christian converts. Perhaps because of his importance to Colenso as a printer, and because of the fact that he was not engaged in religious teaching at the mission, he was able to escape the fate of William Ngidi who was ejected from Bishopstowe in 1869 when he insisted on marrying more than one wife, although he was a convert.

A theme that comes across forcefully in the book is Fuze's sense of Zulu nationalism. Probably this evolved in parallel with Colenso's own views on the viability of the Zulu polity and his growing respect and admiration for Cetshwayo after 1877, when he took up the cudgels on behalf of a nation he believed to be deeply wronged by the actions of British officials. As chief printer at Bishopstowe Fuze was largely responsible for setting the voluminous sheets written by Colenso on Zulu affairs. These sheets eventually constituted Bishop Colenso's *Digest of Zulu Affairs* (1879-1883) which was an important weapon in his search for justice for the Zulu people. On at least two occasions, Fuze was sent by Colenso to Zululand to gather information on Zulu affairs. Messengers from Zululand to Pietermaritzburg frequently called at Bishopstowe for the Bishop's advice, and this gave Colenso the opportunity to ascertain the validity of official views about their king and their own attitude to him, through careful questioning.

In his account of Zulu history, which forms the bulk of the book, Fuze gives a favourable account of all the Zulu kings with the exception of Dingane who, in his view, never committed a single good act. Shaka was not merely the progeny of Senzangakhona and Nandi, he was

'a special product appearing from above, who arrived here expressly for the purpose of bringing unity to the country instead of disunity, and rule by one person instead of everyone doing as he pleased.'

When he visited Zululand in 1878 Fuze found Cetshwayo

'a pleasant person with a good presence, handsome, concerned for all his people, and extremely kind in his speech.'

He was deeply impressed with the just manner with which Cetshwayo tried the cases brought before him. Nearly twenty years earlier he had had his first encounter with Cetshwayo, then heir apparent to Mpande's throne, when he accompanied Colenso's expedition to Mpande in 1859. Fuze recorded this experience as the author of one of the *Three Native Accounts of a visit to King Mpande in 1859*.

But Fuze's sense of nationalism was not simply confined to the Zulu nation. It extended beyond to incorporate a sense of a common identity with all the black people of Africa about whom he learned from visitors to Bishopstowe. Among them was Alice Werner, who subsequently became professor of Swahili and Bantu Languages at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, and who provided information about the people of the Zambezi:

Fuze's account of Zulu history illuminates many points of interest from a Zulu perspective. For instance, his account of the death of Nandi, the mother of Shaka, differs markedly from that of Fynn. Fynn argued that she died of dysentery, whereas Fuze reveals that she was stabbed by Shaka who was angry with her for concealing a girl of the Cele clan who had given birth to a son by him. Shaka did not have wives, only a harem of girls, because he did not want to produce sons who might threaten his position.

Probably Fuze's passion for recording the past of his people was stimulated by Colenso's own interest in recording historical events. One of the first books to be used in the school at Ekukhanyeni was a history book written by Colenso in 1856 and entitled *Izindaba Zas 'eNatal*. Fuze reproduced this in full, although the editor of the translation has cut it drastically. Fuze's comments on the text are of great interest. For instance, Colenso records the death of Retief largely from a colonial perspective, seeing the act as irrational and treacherous. Fuze adds a different perspective. When Retief and his companions visited Dingane in order to obtain a land grant, they were provided with quarters from which they paid visits to the king at Mgungundlovu. At night they were seen by the night watchmen going out and encircling Mgungundlovu. In Fuze's words,

'It was for this reason . . . that Dingane killed them, realising that although they had said they had come with goodwill, they had evil in their hearts; for why did they want to surround his residence during the night?'

In treating more recent Zulu history, Fuze is able to record experiences often at first hand. His views of people such as Hamu and Zibhebhu, who were ranged against the Zulu king, differ markedly from official perspectives which held them in high esteem. Zibhebhu, 'with his lop-sided little headring', was accustomed to 'doing evil things'. He records Cetshwayo's own words spoken to him before the outbreak of the Anglo-Zulu war, 'Do you know that the white people are coming here? But we Zulus will not run away from them.' Fuze was firmly convinced that the European invasion of Zululand was the result of a decision

'to destroy this savage government adjacent to an enlightened one, be-

cause the Natal Government feared that one day it would be suddenly and unexpectedly attacked.'

Fuze's account of Cetshwayo's death on 8 February, 1884 suggests that there was more to it than the official view that he had died of a diseased heart. Cetshwayo had gone to live under the protection of the British Resident, Melmoth Osborn (Malimati) at Eshowe on 17 October, 1883, amidst the turmoil of the Zulu Civil War. Although he was loyally served by Keke's people, Cetshwayo was distressed because in Fuze's words, 'he was not in friendly relationship with Malimati.' Osborn and the official establishment in Zululand were hostile to the interests of the Zulu royal family and were in league with Zibhebhu, who had brought about his downfall. After eating a beast that Osborn had slaughtered for him, Cetshwayo suffered stomach pains and died shortly afterwards. Recently, at the unveiling of Cetshwayo's tombstone at Nkandla in September 1980, it was alleged that British officials had poisoned Cetshwayo.

In Professor Cope, Fuze has a sympathetic and unobtrusive editor. Although responsible for the division of the book into three sections — History, Ethnography and Zulu History — Professor Cope has tried as far as possible to retain the original arrangement and order of the chapters. He has not imposed any chronological order for

'the relevance of an historical event is seen more clearly and from different points in time, as the Zulu praiser does in his chronicles of the kings, rather than as a constant point on an historical scale.'

Professor Cope has been concerned to preserve the book as Fuze's creation, to retain the quality of the book as it was written 'with all its peculiarities, inconsistencies, errors and omissions.' In addition to his valuable notes on the text, supplemented by those of the historian, Dr Shula Marks, Professor Cope has supplied the most useful and reliable references in order to enable the reader to pursue points of interest.

A brief review can indicate only a few of the many points of interest in this book. It should be read by everyone interested in Natal and Zulu history, and should serve as inspiration for the development of black historical writing, drawing on all the techniques and methods at the disposal of the modern historian. It is only when all South Africans contribute that the richness, complexity and diversity of our past can be understood in its entirety. And with better understanding there will perhaps be greater wisdom in the present. *The Black People and whence they came* constitutes an impressive first volume in the launching of the translation series. One looks forward to more publications in this series.

RUTH EDGEcombe

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ZULU KINGDOM: THE CIVIL WAR IN ZULULAND, 1879-1884

By JEFF GUY

(Published by Longman, London, 1979.)

The last two issues of *Natalia* have carried reviews of seven of the spate of books that have recently been published to take advantage of the market created by public interest in the centenary of the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879.

Most of these works focus on the military aspect of the war, an aspect which has a special fascination for the large readership which takes pleasure in descriptions of the achievements of British imperial arms, or in the romanticisation of the Zulu warrior as the archetypal noble savage. Few of them are concerned to challenge the myths about the origins and consequences of the war that have built up over the last hundred years; few of them show interest in Zulu history before and after the war. The book under review, an academic but highly readable study, does both, and thereby sets itself in a class apart.

Two prefatory chapters of Jeff Guy's book describe the main structural features of the Zulu social and political system during the sixty years of the kingdom's existence; a third analyses the reasons for the British invasion of the kingdom in 1879; a fourth (mercifully brief) outlines the course of the ensuing war. From these chapters three important theses emerge. The first concerns the origins of the war. It is by now fairly widely accepted (at least among academic historians — among popularisers of Zulu history the idea still survives that the cause of the war was 'Zulu aggression') that this conflict was a consequence of attempts made from 1875 onward to implement Lord Carnarvon's policy of southern African confederation. Guy argues that this policy itself and therefore the Anglo-Zulu War, must be seen in the context of changes in the political economy of southern Africa consequent on the discovery of diamonds in the late 1860s. Expansion of British and colonial capital investment could not safely and profitably take place without modernisation and co-ordination of local systems of labour control, of communications, and of defence: the weakening of Zulu power was one of the steps necessary before this could be brought about.

Understandably, but perhaps unfortunately, Guy limits his argument on this point to the space of a page or two — understandably, because it is not his concern to explain the origins of the Anglo-Zulu War in detail; unfortunately, because with elaboration of his argument he might have been able to deflect some of the more uncomprehending — and sometimes snide — criticisms of his line of reasoning that have begun to appear from the pens of more conventionally-minded historians. Given the long-standing debate among historians over the nature of the "imperial factor" in 19th-century southern Africa, it would have been to the benefit of his readers for Guy to have taken his point further.

The second important thesis concerns the role of Theophilus Shepstone, Natal's Secretary for Native Affairs for thirty years to 1876, in manoeuvring the Zulu into war with the British. Historians have recently tended to cast the British High Commissioner, Sir Bartle Frere, as the villain of the piece: Guy demonstrates convincingly that close at his shoulder in 1878, helping him find pretexts for invading Zululand, stood that *éminence grise*, Shepstone, who for years had had his mind on ways of gaining control of the Zulu kingdom's resources of land and labour as a means of meeting Natal's increasing shortage of both. A major reassessment of Shepstone's role in Natal and Zulu history is long overdue: Guy's brief analysis represents a step towards it.

The third important thesis concerns the extent of the Zulu defeat in 1879. Contrary to the view propagated by the British army's officer caste in 1879, a view that has since become firmly entrenched in the literature on the war,

Guy argues that though the Zulu were defeated on the battlefield they did not suffer total political defeat. Given the strong opposition to the war in certain British political circles, the Zulu victory at Isandlwana, together with the resistance which they offered to the British army for more than seven months, forced British officials in southern Africa to reconsider the terms which they had originally intended to impose on the Zulu once the latter had been defeated. Guy cites evidence to indicate that Frere had planned to annex Zulu territory, depose King Cetshwayo kaMpande, and establish a military administration over the country; in the event, in terms of the settlement eventually imposed by Sir Garnet Wolseley, the Zulu lost their king but retained their land and their cattle and, consequently, the basis for continued independence. At the end of the war they were a defeated but hardly a broken people.

The disintegration of Zulu society, Guy goes on to argue, was thus not so much the outcome of the war of 1879 as of the increasingly violent internal conflicts which developed after the removal of the king, and which were exacerbated by his subsequent restoration as ruler of part of his former kingdom. On one side was the Zulu royalist party, the Usuthu; on the other were the rival Mandlakazi and Ngenetsheni parties, respectively under Zibhebhu kaMaphitha and Hamu kaNzibe. These latter were actively aided and abetted by the Natal colonial administration, which was fiercely opposed to any attempt at reviving the power of the Zulu royal house. The machinations of Natal officials, together with the refusal of the British government to intervene in Zulu affairs, though pressed to do so both by the Usuthu and the Natal government, served to prolong the struggle to the point where the production base of Zulu society began to break down. Threatened with the total extinction of their support, the Usuthu leaders in desperation turned to the only available source of help — Boers from the Transvaal. In mid-1884 Boer firepower was decisive in enabling the Usuthu to overcome the Mandlakazi, and the bitter and destructive civil war was over.

The bulk of Guy's book focuses on the month-by-month manoeuvrings of the Usuthu leaders after 1879 in their efforts to maintain their internal support and to seek external allies. The field has been worked over before by other historians, but none has attempted, as does Guy, to illustrate in detail how the conflict in Zululand was the outcome not simply of local rivalries but also of events in Natal, the Transvaal, and Britain. The exercise is a complex one; in a large measure Guy succeeds in it. To the extent that he fails it is because his focus is primarily on the Usuthu. A fully comprehensive account of the civil war would need to investigate in detail — so far as the sources allowed it — the composition through time of the Mandlakazi and Ngenetsheni parties, and the nature of the forces which influenced their leaders to follow the courses of action which they did. In this connection Guy provides some tantalising — but all-too-briefly expressed — insights: in contrast to the 'traditionalist' leadership of the Usuthu, Zibhebhu and Hamu are seen as examples of 'new men' whose power rested to a large extent on the close links which they had established with the outside world of colonial politics and economies. The point would seem to be crucially important to an understanding of Zulu history in the period under discussion; it is to be regretted that the author did not expand on it and at the same time weave it more closely into his overall argument.

In partial exoneration of the author for his omission, the point should be made that one of his central concerns is to try to set the record straight as to the role played by the Usuthu in the civil war. Because of the Natal administration's opposition to the Zulu royalist cause, the bulk of the contemporary official documents which bear on Zulu affairs, and which survive today as primary source material for the historian, are unremittingly hostile to the Usuthu. In seeking to correct a bias which has persisted in the literature for a hundred years, Guy has — perhaps unavoidably — kept the Usuthu on the centre of the stage.

A concluding chapter takes the narrative from 1884 to the early 1890s. By the end of the civil war,

'the unity and self-sufficiency which existed before 1879 was gone; the regiments, both the product and the guardian of Zulu independence were broken, the people deeply divided politically, and neither warring faction had escaped crippling losses and defeat in battle. And as the Zulu entered this state of material weakness, social chaos and political fragmentation, the colonial authorities in the south and the armed whites in the north demanded radical changes in the Zulu way of life' (p. 231).

In 1884 the Usuthu's Boer allies took over large tracts of territory in the north and west of Zululand as part of the price of their support. In 1887 the rest of the former kingdom was annexed by Britain; and the way was finally opened for the exploitation by outsiders of Zululand's resources of land and labour. By the early 1890s many of the men who, a dozen years before, had been heads of largely self-sufficient homesteads, were having to sell their labour on the farms and mines and in the towns of Natal and the Transvaal. This has been the lot of their descendants ever since.

In conclusion: *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom* is an important book from two perspectives. At a local level, it forms a significant addition to the still all-too-small body of academic works on Zulu history. At a broader level, it provides an illuminating case-study of the impact of European and of settler imperialism on an African society. That it does both these things together is an indication of the author's thorough knowledge of his subject, and a tribute to the range of his scholarship.

JOHN WRIGHT

DURBAN AT YOUR FEET

An alternative guide to a city.

By BAREND VAN NIEKERK

(Published by Overport Publishers, 1979.)

When first encountering Professor Barend van Niekerk's book it is advisable to summon up all reserves to meet a barrage of purposely provocative questions and remarks. He is engagingly frank and delights in the confusion that his sudden and often unconventional pronouncements may engender. Like a dose of fruit salts, such a meeting leaves one stirred up, on one's toes, refreshed, sparkling and sparking. *Durban at your feet* is a reflection of the author's personality, and reading it has much the same effect. All but the most apathetic will be prepared to do battle against the possible destruc-

tion of the cultural worth and beauty of Durban city — which is of course a Good Thing, (though caution should be observed when walking where angels fear to tread). In his introduction (following upon an excellent Foreword by Alan Paton), Barend van Niekerk says “In short Durban — or DURBS as we call it in a nostalgic or inebriated mood — is not a city which carries much beauty or inherent charm on its sleeve. In many respects, however, it is almost certainly South Africa’s most charming city but the charm must be sought out, sometimes squeezed out. It is not far to seek but seek it you must. It is my hope that this modest work will help you, the visitor to or the citizen of Durban, to seek out the charm and even perhaps (if you are a citizen), contribute to it.” In the following 202 pages — absolutely packed with useful information — he uncovers beauty and interest in every section of our city, much of it unnoticed by its residents. In this alone the book has made a special contribution. Professor van Niekerk is not hampered by rose-coloured spectacles and one of the most endearing features of the book is that it is completely free of the gushing descriptions that usually litter publicity publications. Most of his assessments are fair (but not always comfortable) — credit where credit is due and a straight left where that seems necessary, and he pops in many bright ideas for consideration. The beaches are referred to as “lovely but no longer always clean”, and although condemning the Golden Mile, he appreciates a trip by cable car.

The author’s choice of words is as unconventional as the rest of him. Who else would ‘envision up’ memories, or call Queen Victoria’s statue “unusually sexy”, and the Town Gardens “South Africa’s most monumentalised acre”? It seems almost unfair to mention that, particularly in the historical section, this useful and entertaining book is marred by a few slips and printer’s errors — a revised edition is soon to appear I believe. The printer’s error that particularly tickles my fancy has the Bay in the early days “surrounded with mango swamps”.

In my opinion the chapters are well balanced. The first deals with the historical background, and the next two take one on a tour of the centre of the City. Grey Street and its environs are inspected in a chapter that is devoted to the Indian community, and the Amenities (“The best things in life are free”) and Outer Durban (“Islands of Sanity”) each have a section to themselves and so does the Waterfront — beach and bay. The “Islands of Sanity” pages provide contact with the Zulu People and their natural lifestyle — not available within the city — and the final 30 pages, entitled *The Fat of the Earth*, comprise a preliminary guide to wining and dining in Durban. This latter is a useful section, but not as useful as the last five pages — the index. An informative book without an index is a frustrating object but one with a comprehensive index such as this is a welcome addition to any bookshelf.

Presumably to keep down costs, the print is small and the cover soft and there are a few advertisements, but the format is clear and the cover design by Andrew Verster most attractive and pertinent to the purpose of the book.

What perhaps appeals most and comes through on every page is the author’s obvious delight in Durban’s natural and man-made assets and his determination that all sections of the community shall share in their benefits and fight for their survival. Excelsior, Professor van Niekerk!

DAPHNE STRUTT

FLOWER PAINTINGS OF KATHARINE SAUNDERS

Botanical and Biographical Notes and Explanations by Emeritus Professor A. BAYER

(Published by The Tongaat Group Ltd, P.O. Box 5, Maidstone 4380, 1979.)

The Tongaat Group, a Natal-based organisation, recently celebrated its sixtieth anniversary as a public company in South Africa. To commemorate the occasion the decision was taken to produce a publication that would allow a broad sector of the shareholders of the Company and the public to enjoy one of the many treasures within the Tongaat Collection and archives. It was felt that at the same time a history should be produced of the early times when James and Katharine Saunders founded the Tongaat Estate on the coast not far north of Durban.

The outcome of these decisions, the book, *Flower Paintings of Katharine Saunders*, is a splendid achievement, worthy in every way of the people it is intended to honour. Not only is it beautifully presented, but the contents are of wide appeal, for, apart from the 147 paintings reproduced in 106 plates, it includes Katharine's own story; that of a pioneer wife in a sub-tropical, rather primitive environment from 1854 to 1901, and of her earlier life in England. It is told by a relative, her great grandson Edward Saunders, who, raised in Tongaat, now lives and works in Europe, where he writes and lectures in the Arts for institutions such as the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The book also includes an account of the contribution Katharine made to the Botany of Natal by her love of plants and her water-colour painting and, to put this into perspective, there is a brief history of early botanists in Natal, several of whom, by buying land and farming near Tongaat, became Katharine's neighbours, friends and collaborators in her botanical interests.

The emphasis throughout is thus historical and the book should appeal to all who have a feeling for early Natal. But the book has appeal, too, in other ways: the standards of presentation and publication are high indeed and those who esteem quality will appreciate and wish to have access to this fine volume. It makes available to many the artistic ability of Katharine who illustrated so well during her lifetime the features and colouring of so many South African plants. Sixteen of her folios containing about seven hundred of the floral paintings she produced during forty years of work have survived; eleven of the folios are in the library of the Tongaat Group; five are in the possession of the Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg. From these folios a selection was made to cover the range of the varied flora of Natal and to include some plants from other parts of South Africa, the latter painted mostly while the artist was travelling, without undue concentration on any one group such as the orchids which held particular interest for her. Katharine must have been fascinated by the wealth of botanical material around her, and its bizarre and bold contrasts with the more restricted and less flamboyant flowers of her home country. Each plate is accompanied by botanical notes giving the valid name of the plant illustrated, the name by which it was known to Katharine, and its features of particular interest. These notes are interesting and accurate, for they were compiled by two Natal botanists: the late Professor Adolf Bayer with the help of Dr O.M. Hilliard of the University of Natal. The paintings are detailed, and the form

of the plants usually very well depicted. The reproduction throughout is admirable both in colouring and in the meticulous precision of the work. Some plates have a background of colour: these, to me, were mostly of particular appeal because of the enhanced three dimensional effect produced. One plate is disappointing, for the well-known and widespread *Leonotus leonurus* lacks the vigour and life it has in the autumnal vegetation; a few others show, for me, a little too much white paper. To a botanist it is obvious that the plants painted were gathered for this purpose and not as botanical specimens, for there are some illustrations of flower spikes without other parts of the plant. The book is not intended for the specialist, except in Africa, perhaps.

The reader is brought close to Katharine and her husband, James, the people and places they knew and the difficult times in which they lived. Chris Saunders, Chairman of the Tongaat Group, in his preface, remarks that he feels the book is more than a record of the past. "It symbolises for the Tongaat Group that we have come of age. We are no longer just a dot on the map, a statistic in the Stock Exchange records, but rather a place where men, women and children of all races live, work and play with the object of making our world a better place in which to live."

By its high standards the book well fulfils its purpose as a commemorative volume; it has a grace and dignity in keeping with life as it was lived in Natal in the latter half of the nineteenth century by upright and purposeful people like this pioneer couple. But with all this, or because of it, the humanity Chris Saunders would have the book symbolise comes through. Simplicity, directness and sincerity are written into its pages. It is a book for many people to cherish and enjoy.

K.D. GORDON-GRAY

BIRD ATLAS OF NATAL

By D.P. CYRUS and N.F. ROBSON

(Published by the University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg 1980.

pp i-xx, 320. Numerous maps and text figs.)

When the present reviewer embarked on the *Birds of Natal and Zululand* (1964) in 1962/1963 he made an appeal to all interested parties in Natal and Zululand to provide him with original records of uncommon birds and lists of species from as many parts of the Province as possible. The outcome of the appeal was that not a single record of moment or local list was made available, and the entire work had in the end to be compiled on the basis of the author's own field researches through the Durban and Natal Museums, on specimens preserved in these centres, and on the literature, much of which was by that time already old and very largely out of date.

Happily, the background to the production of this arresting new analysis of the rich avifauna of Natal and Zululand is strikingly different. The *Bird Atlas of Natal* is the outcome of a well-organised co-operative effort by a small army of dedicated amateurs, supported by the Natal Parks Board, the Natal Bird Club, etc., and working as a team under the inspired leadership of Messrs Cyrus and Robson. Unlike the earlier work, the *Atlas* considers

only those birds actually recorded in the Province during a single decade (1970–1980), and as a result more accurately reflects the true current status of the avifauna. Just under six hundred and sixty species of birds are listed, most of which are dealt with on individual maps (with two maps per page). Range is shown by a system of twelve month segmented discs arranged in quarter-degree squares, the discs variably blocked-in to show incidence and status in the square. By and large, the method employed works well enough, but fails to discriminate effectively between just simple or casual occurrence in an area and actual residence as a breeder.

The English names employed throughout follow the ever popular Roberts's *Birds of South Africa*, while the scientific nomenclature is that laid down by Clancey *et al.*, in the recent *S.A.O.S. Checklist of Southern African Birds* (1980). The general range statements have been adapted from MSS copies of the latter work put at the disposal of the *Atlas* compilers. All this material has been singularly competently handled by Messrs Cyrus and Robson and I could pinpoint no very obvious errors.

To turn to the body of the work, I find it difficult to understand why a map had to be provided for the Greater Frigatebird *Fregata minor*, since the species is only known as a cyclonic vagrant to the Natal and Zululand coast, and especially as it is still uncertain if all frigatebird records are of *F. minor*. *F. ariel* could also conceivably occur on occasion, as both species breed on islands in the western Indian Ocean. On the other hand, the reviewer believes maps should have been provided for integral species such as the Short-tailed Pipit *Anthus brachyurus*, which was originally discovered near Durban in Natal, and for which there are several very recent records from the Natal interior and part of Zululand. Another species is the Knysna Scrub Warbler *Bradypterus sylvaticus*, which is a regular winter visitor to Natal coastal bushes as far north as Durban. Admittedly, unless collected this nondescript species is readily confused with its congener (Barratt's) Scrub Warbler *Bradypterus barratti*, which likewise ranges in the winter months to the same coastal bushes. Another species which surely deserved a map of its own is the Lemonbreasted Canary *Serinus citrinipectus*, with numerous records south to Hluhluwe to its credit.

Confusion in the field with other small 'cloud' cisticolas seems to be the reason for the extensive range incorrectly accorded the Cloud Cisticola *Cisticola texrix* (p. 224). This species occurs in two populations in the Province, one restricted to the upper districts from Elandslaagte to the Transvaal border at Volksrust, and the other to the sandy littoral of north-eastern Zululand. The erroneous distribution shown on this map highlights the need to collect and preserve the odd specimen when investigating the status of difficult groups of this kind and the undesirability of relying solely on sight records. Reference to Clancey, *loc. cit.*, p. 369, should have alerted the authors to the possibility of error having crept into some of their field determinations in the case of *C. texrix*.

It is a pity that the authors did not on occasion endeavour to interpret the range data more closely in order to highlight the marked seasonal altitudinal changes which occur in many species.

Mr Tony Clarkson's pen and ink studies are a major feature of this new work and hence warrant critical assessment. While these studies are in the main both pleasing and effective they are uneven, and the artist has still

to develop a personal style, many of his drawings showing the strong influence of other artists. The better sketches have a direct photographic basis, while the poorer ones are those in which the artist has had to rely on his limited acquaintance with the species concerned or else has referred to the work of others. One or two of the drawings strike a distinctly discordant note, notably that of (Barratt's) Scrub Warbler (p. 219), which is of a bird which is certainly not a Scrub Warbler, as the ventral surface is heavily spotted with black. In the warbler concerned only the forethroat is lightly streaked with hairlines. The scale of some of the drawings could also have been more critically observed in order to obviate the impression that, for instance, the Greyheaded Sparrow is a much smaller bird than the Yellowthroated Sparrow (p. 268), whereas the two are similar in size.

However, these are all relatively minor points which can be readily adjusted in later updatings of this important new work, which reflects greatly to the credit of the two authors and their team of active colleagues. The work is clearly printed and very nicely produced by the University of Natal Press. Its appearance ahead of that of other atlas undertakings is a tribute to all concerned, and Natal can take pride in being the very first territory in all Africa to have its own bird atlas.

P.A. CLANCEY

ANGLO-ZULU WAR CENTENARY AFTERMATH AND OTHER MATTERS MILITARY

Published too late to receive notice in last year's number were: Maxwell, John: *Reminiscences of the Zulu War*; edited by Leonie Twentyman Jones. Cape Town, University of Cape Town Libraries, 1979. (Varia series, 15). 23p. facsimis., maps. Maxwell, the son of an 1851 Natal settler Commander F.S. Maxwell, served as a lieutenant in the 3rd Natal Native Contingent. He was among the force that went out from Isandlwana the day before the Zulu attack. Highlights in his narrative are his descriptions of Isandlwana the night after the battle, and subsequently on visits in March and May, 1879.

Clark, Sonia, ed.: *Invasion of Zululand, 1879*. Sandton, Brenthurst press, 1979. (Brenthurst series, 5). 296p. illus., maps. This consists of the letters written at the time of the War by Lt. Col. Arthur Harness, Natal's Lt.-Governor Sir Henry Bulwer, and Lt. John Jervis (later Viscount St Vincent).

A pamphlet on the War now available locally is *The 24th Regiment at Isandhlwana: the Zulu War 1879*, by Frank Emery. (Brecon, The Royal Regiment of Wales, 1979. 19p., illus.) This is based on the narrative compiled by Capt. William Penn Symons from information given him by survivors of the battle.

Information has been received of two publications by Samson Books. Both are directed at medal collectors, but have much to offer the historian. Firstly *The silver wreath; being the 24th Regiment at Isandhlwana and Rorke's Drift, 1879*. London, Samson Books, 1980. 102p. illus. A complete roll of names and biographical details of the officers and men of the 24th who fell at

Isandlwana is given, plus a 'comprehensive' roll with biographical information, of those present at Rorke's Drift. There is also a hitherto unpublished description of the Rorke's Drift action by Lt. Chard, and statements by six private soldiers who survived Isandlwana.

The other is Everson, Gordon R.: *The South Africa 1853 medal; being the roll of the recipients and the story of the campaign medal issued for the frontier wars between 1834 and 1853*. London, Samson Books, 1978. 158 p., front., maps. Here one finds lists of over 9 600 recipients of this medal, both soldiers and marines. For each regiment a brief history is presented of its actions on the frontier in these years. The lists following are in order of rank, indicating in which of the three wars, viz. 1834-5, 1846-7 and 1850-3, each recipient had been engaged.

S.P.M. SPENCER