

# *Book Reviews and Notices*

## **TRAVELS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, Volume 2**

By ADULPHE DELEGORGUE

Translated by FLEUR WEBB, introduced and annotated by STEPHANIE J ALEXANDER and BILL GUEST.

Durban, Killie Campbell Africana Library and Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1997. xxxii, 401 pp. R94.95

The division of Delegorgue's *Travels* into two volumes was an arbitrary one and the appearance of the second volume now completes a project initiated and inspired by the late Colin Webb. Once again, Fleur Webb has presented a smooth and highly readable English translation of the original French and Stephanie Alexander has provided the valuable scientific commentary. The general editorship was taken over by Bill Guest who has performed it with insight and sensitivity. Much of what was said by Gordon Maclean in his admirable review of the first volume of the *Travels* in *Natalia*, no. 21, December 1991 could be said again of the second. Delegorgue, not without his prejudices and an ability to exaggerate, was, on the whole, an accurate observer and lively commentator whose account conveys his own consuming curiosity and pleasure in discovery.

Delegorgue's travels began when he sailed from France in May 1838. In June 1839 he arrived in Port Natal, and it is from January 1842 that the second volume takes up the story and continues it until he returns to France via St Helena in February 1844. His account of the latter part of his Natal and Zululand experiences occupies just over half of this second volume. The continuation of his journey over the Drakensberg and his observations and hunting exploits in the 'land of Massilicatze', though interesting, are of less specific concern to readers of *Natalia*. It is worth noting that his admiration for the Zulu people did not extend to the 'Makatisse'. With unashamed arrogance he viewed the Zulu as the 'French of south-east Africa' while the loosely defined 'Makatisse' (Mantatees) of the interior highveld he likened to the German-speaking world. His acquaintance with the emigrant Boers of the interior only served to confirm the disdain with which he viewed them in Natal, although this prejudice did not exclude his admiration for their hunting prowess and some pleasant relations with particular individuals such as Servaas van Breda of Congella and the 'Vermaes' north of Potchefstroom. He also shared their dislike of the English and of missionaries.

In the Natal and Zulu context, two aspects of this volume are especially worthy of note. The first is Delegorgue's first-hand account of the Boer-British struggle for

Natal and the hostilities at Port Natal in 1842. Add to that his account of the earlier negotiations between Piet Retief and Dingane and their violent aftermath; and Dingane's overthrow and succession by his half-brother, Mpande, as Zulu King; and Delegorgue's own participation in the commando which drove Dingane northwards, and one has here a source which historians cannot ignore. The second is a chapter devoted wholly to the 'Customs of the Amazoulous' which could well be compulsory reading for all who live in KwaZulu-Natal. While specialists might debate the detail, his close and sympathetic observation of the Zulu people engenders warm interest, to say the least. It amplifies his admiration for the Zulu already evident in the first volume. His view does not appear to have been affected by his fall from grace with Mpande which contributed partially to his departure from Natal to the interior.

For Delegorgue, hunting and collecting and scientific observation went together. While he admitted to the pathos of killing innocent creatures for the sake of displaying an 'imperfect imitation of life', he also revelled in the hunt. The sensitive reader cannot but be appalled by his comment that '... all we could do was to collapse in helpless laughter at the ludicrous scene' of three wounded elephant falling one by one on each other and two others, and who then had to extricate themselves, only to be treated by Delegorgue to 'a parting shot at the back-side of one of the last to leave' (p.20). If the reality that men hunt is accepted, then it is the discoverer and the naturalist which dominate Delegorgue's writing. It makes for gripping reading whatever one's conservationist leanings might be.

The completion of the Delegorgue project is an important event for scholarship. It contains one of the earliest known lists of Zulu words, introduced here by Adrian Koopman. It makes available a mass of source material for historians, biologists, sociologists, environmentalists and a source of interest and pleasure to countless others. The fact that Fleur Webb and Stephanie Alexander were so significant a part of the team which translated and edited this essentially masculine work, augurs well for its all-round appeal.

SYLVIA VIETZEN

## **POLITICAL ECONOMY AND IDENTITIES IN KWAZULU-NATAL: HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES**

Edited by ROBERT MORRELL.

Durban, Indicator Press, 1996. ii, 200 pp. ISBN 1-86840-231-2

At last we have a scholarly work which extends beyond the colonial history of Natal and KwaZulu. *Political Economy and Identities* will become an indispensable adjunct to courses which involve the teaching of the history of the province.

The history of the region to 1990 is treated in seven chapters, each of them demarcated by subheadings for clarity of presentation. The first focuses on political change and ethnicity in the precolonial period and especially on development in the Zulu kingdom. The next chapter describes the effects of European intrusion in the region, and the third the consequences of the European settlers' more or less firm

control of government there. Chapter 4 deals with the self-conscious efforts of the unenfranchised groups to articulate and to remedy their grievances. Chapter 5 carries the story forward into the *apartheid* era, and the last two chapters interpret the revolutionary movements of the 1970s and 80s.

The editor tells us in the preface that the parturition of this work was not an easy one. Conceived at the Workshop on Regionalism and Restructuring in KwaZulu-Natal at the University of Natal in Durban in early 1988 and born by the Natal Worker History Project connected with the University's Sociology Department, it experienced many vicissitudes before reaching maturity.

No small part of the difficulty seems to have arisen from the determination of contributors to preserve a collective authorship for the respective chapters, an approach which could not be sustained in every instance. The contributors initially wanted to write "a history of the underclasses", but their number and predilections evidently precluded this and resulted in a work of somewhat broader scope, involving "a wide range of revisionist historians and social scientists" under a four-person editorial collective. There are eight authors for seven chapters — four for one chapter, three for another, two for two, and one for each of the remaining three. Ten other persons are cited as having made material contributions to four of them. It is hardly a wonder then that Professor Irina Filatova writes in the introduction that the text is "not entirely theoretically coherent". There are some rather curious discrepancies in statements regarding intentions and accomplishments between the preface and the introduction, but notwithstanding these the contributors have succeeded rather well in keeping the material together and on track. Of course, some chapters are better than others.

The sub-title states plainly that the work presents "historical and social perspectives". The term "political economy" has a special meaning for radical and revisionist historians and the innocent reader who expects to learn much about past politics and economics will be disappointed. There does not appear to be a political scientist or economist among the contributors, and the chapters show it. Faithful to their first desire their work focuses primarily on the underclasses, somewhat discursively on the so-called middle class. There is virtually nothing about money and banking or about business and entrepreneurship or about the broader rational intervention of the state in economic affairs which historically constitutes "political economy". Indeed, after Chapter 3 the Europeans practically drop out of the text, and it becomes more of a strain to reconcile the incompatible partners of the unhappy marriage of ethnicity and class formation.

This is not a book for light reading by persons with a passing interest in the local history. In its narrow field it is a good book. Its initiators frankly set out to produce a certain kind of history, and after troubles along the way they got that kind of production. In the broader field of regional history the book stands alone, until some similar or more comprehensive work is published. Probably we shall wait a very long time for that. In the meantime *Political Economy and Identities* will hold sway among the professional if not the amateur historians of the province.

P. S. THOMPSON

**GANDHI'S LEGACY: THE NATAL INDIAN CONGRESS 1894–1994**

By SURENDRA BHANA

Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1997, x, 187 pp. illus., soft cover, R64.95.

Yet another by-product of Gandhi's eviction from the train on the Pietermaritzburg station is this concise but penetrating study of the Natal Indian Congress from its founding in 1894 to its somewhat dismal centenary celebrations in 1994. It is, on the one hand, the history of a political organisation, with enough acronyms, legislation and intrigue to test the reader's concentration. On the other hand, it is a cultural study of a colonial people who are as concerned with their ethnicity as with the principles of justice and freedom in the broader South African society. In the balancing of these interests lies the fascination of the book.

Surendra Bhana identifies three distinct periods in the Congress's history. The early period from 1894 to 1914 was dominated by wealthy Indian merchants who, largely in their own interests, sought to resolve issues of racial justice in Natal by appealing to the doctrine of equality within the imperial brotherhood. In the second period from 1921 to 1961, there was a shift from empire to a search for liaison with other black peoples. While retaining its focus on Indian issues, it broadened to identify with the Freedom Charter of 1955 and its challenge to the whole racial system in South Africa. In the third period from 1971 to the present, the Natal Indian Congress has become part of the broad front of organisations which has worked to destroy apartheid and promote non-racial democracy. There were two fallow periods: between 1914 and its revival in 1921, and between 1961 and 1971. The first followed Gandhi's return to India and the conflict which emerged around leadership styles, including Gandhi's. The second related to a sense of ineffectiveness in the wake of the treason trials of 1956 and the state's heavy-handedness. The author traces the course of events systematically and brings life to his account with thumb-nail sketches of leading figures. Abdulla Adam, the first president, A.I. Kajee and P.R. Pather, 'Monty' Naicker, H.A. Naidoo, Debi Singh, J.N. Singh, I.C. Meer and Dr K. Goonam, and, from beyond Natal, influential people like Nana Sita, Yusuf Dadoo and Ahmed Kathrada, are among those whose work and personalities are given perspective.

The central issue which this work faces boldly is whether a 'settler' group can promote its own rights and those of the majority indigenous group at the same time. Herein lay the essential flaw of the Natal Indian Congress. When it worked with the freedom movements — as when it adopted the Freedom Charter — conservative elements in its membership were alienated. Without the support of the alliance — as when the ANC was banned in 1960 — the Natal Indian Congress could not sustain itself politically. Linked to this is whether 'passive resistance' without the help of radical political action was an effective strategy.

What, then, was Gandhi's legacy in terms of the Natal Indian Congress? He urged the Indian merchants to establish it on 22 August 1894 to oppose the threatened disfranchisement of Indians in Natal, and was its first secretary. In Bhana's view, 'Gandhi's enduring legacy was that he created "Indianness"', inadvertently playing on racial divisions and helping to embed them in subsequent

South African politics. Those seeking to rejuvenate the Natal Indian Congress after its centenary in August 1994 will need to heed Surendra Bhana's concluding sentences:

... we need to be wary of moves that will reiterate the ideological underpinnings of apartheid. 'Indianness' as a basis of politics has come to an end however useful it may have been in the early and intermediate years ... In the new political terrain since 1994, it is dead. (p.150)

For the specialist this well-produced book would provide ample substance for debate. For the generalist it is a manageable and tempting invitation to pursue further the Gandhi myth and the intricacies of the Natal Indians' history.

SYLVIA VIETZEN

### **DRAGONFLIES OF THE NATAL DRAKENSBERG**

By MICHAEL SAMWAYS and GAEL WHITELEY

Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1997. 78 pp., illus., R42.95

This booklet is the sixth in the Ukhahlamba Series of guides to what is one of the most scenic and biologically interesting regions of southern Africa, the mountainous region known as the Natal Drakensberg or simply the Berg. The series aims to assist visitors to a fuller appreciation of the natural resources and beauties of the Berg. This contribution, which deals with the dragonflies occurring above an altitude of 1500 metres, is not only the first in the series to be dedicated to a group of invertebrates, but also represents the first new work on South African dragonflies in a generation. The first five booklets in the series dealt with the *Trees and Shrubs* (1985), *Grasses, Sedges, Restiads and Rushes* (1987), *Frogs & Toads* (1988), *Flowers* (1990) and *Rock Paintings* (1992).

Although most people are able to recognise dragonflies when they see them, few are able to identify even the most commonly encountered species. In providing an identification guide to the 23 most commonly encountered Drakensberg species, Samways and Whiteley have not only provided a guide for use by visitors to the Berg, but also a useful introduction for keen amateur naturalists and students of entomology to what is both a well researched, but poorly appreciated group of insects.

The first chapter provides a brief, but useful, introduction to dragonflies. Of particular importance are the sections dealing with the life history of these predatory insects. Subsequent chapters provide a list of the species covered, giving both the scientific and common names by which they are known, as well as identification keys for both the adult and larval forms. Useful descriptions and notes on habitat preferences, behaviour and distribution occupy the bulk of the booklet, the adults being handled separately from the larvae. The usefulness of the booklet is enhanced by an abundance of illustrations. The adult male of each species is featured in a series of colour photographs while the larvae are illustrated by means of line drawings.

There is no doubt that this is a useful addition to the Ukhahlamba Series and that it will assist in no small measure to sensitise readers to the beauty and fascination of dragonflies. In so doing it is hoped that this booklet may also cause people to reflect on the need for far more research on invertebrate animals in general. It is indeed to be lamented that our depth of knowledge of virtually every other group of invertebrate animals (butterflies being one of the few exceptions) does not allow for the production of many other books of this kind.

*Dragonflies* is well written and produced. The book is a little disjointed inasmuch as the colour plates are all placed at the end, while the use of certain scientific terminology could have been avoided. Perhaps the greatest problem which serious users of this booklet will encounter is the problem of collecting and preserving specimens for study. Unlike the identification of many groups of animals, insects are not easy to identify without actually catching them. The novice keen to gain an appreciation of dragonflies will almost certainly need to catch specimens for study and be in a position to file the material away for reference purposes. This is not always easy, as collecting permits are required for much of the Drakensberg. In addition, the interested person will need suitable equipment and chemicals, so that specimens are not damaged during or after collection. These problems, however, should not put people off, as there are museum and university professionals only too keen to encourage and to assist would-be dragonfly enthusiasts.

JASON LONDT

### **THE NATAL NATIVE CONTINGENT IN THE ANGLO-ZULU WAR**

By P.S. THOMPSON

Pietermaritzburg, Privately published by the author, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1997. 394 pp. R100 + VAT.

Not long after his successful book, *The Washing of the Spears*, had captured the imagination of readers of South African history, overseas and in South Africa, the author Donald Morris, conceded that the role of the Natal Native Contingent had been insufficiently explored in his work. Since then, perhaps spurred on by the success of Morris' book, the Anglo-Zulu War has been subject to intense scrutiny, notably by increasing numbers of academic historians. The aim has been, it seems, to produce books which are more academically sound than Morris' work, but are also readable and exciting enough to capture the imagination of thousands of non-academically inclined readers of social and military history. Paul Thompson's work is, however, the first to examine the role of the NNC during the war in great detail.

Thompson's work appears at a difficult time for an author attempting to make a significant impact on the historiography of the Anglo-Zulu War. Although the topic has undoubted academic merit, the task of producing something to rival the impact of authoritative books of the calibre of recent authors like John Laband and, to a lesser extent, Ian Knight, is a very daunting one. For many established readers there is the perception that the market has been flooded with books on the conflict, many of them readable, attractively illustrated and well-researched.

Thompson himself alludes to this in his book, pointing out that the literature of the war has a predominantly European readership which has evinced little interest in what non-Europeans did in the conflict. Moreover, African readership is unlikely to be interested in following the fortunes of colonial collaborators. It is difficult, however, to disagree with Thompson's assertion that without a comprehensive analysis of the role of the NNC in the war, its story would be incomplete.

It is clear that Thompson has attempted, in this work, to produce an analysis which is both academically sound and eminently readable. To what extent has he succeeded?

Scrutiny of the footnotes and source list reveals that he has made a commendable effort to base a great deal of his analysis upon documentary evidence and reputable secondary sources. He is no newcomer to the Anglo-Zulu War, having worked for many years in collaboration with John Laband on several important projects and publications. The result of years of meticulous research into the sources is evident. However, it is disappointing to discover that he has not consulted Ingrid Machin's recent doctoral work on the levying of forced African labour and military service by the colonial state of Natal. Neither has he really attempted to place the role of the NNC in the wider context of Imperial and Zulu strategy. The NNC fell under Chelmsford's overall command and much of what happened to them in the conflict should be seen in the context of the Lieutenant-General's conduct of operations and overall strategy. This has been analysed in Jeff Mathews' doctorate on Chelmsford's generalship in southern Africa and also in some detail in Laband's *Rope of Sand*. As far as Zulu strategy is concerned, Thompson needed to have looked no further than John Laband's extensive analyses. The story of the role of the NNC in the war is comprehensively dealt with, but should have been placed more within the framework of what both the British and colonial authorities and the military were attempting to do, and how Cetshwayo and his generals and advisers were responding to the invasion. It is this somewhat one-dimensional approach to the role of the NNC which is disappointing.

The author's attempt to produce a readable analysis succeeds to a degree. There are a number of lively accounts of episodes of the war and interesting and humorous anecdotes. The accounts of major battles have been retold so many times that it is a considerable challenge to present them in a way which will capture the attention of readers. Thompson's answer is to write short, punchy and dramatic sentences, a strategy which does not always succeed. An example is when he writes about the battle of Ulundi:

... The enemy is within three hundred yards. Captain Shepstone gives the order. The rifles flash. The Zulus do not stop. They fire, too. The fire is heavy, but the bullets go overhead ... The Zulus are within a hundred yards. Shepstone orders his men to fall back into the square. They won't. They are checking the enemy. They are afraid to go into the square ...

The narrative is also shortened, not only in terms of the length of sentences, but also in the depth of actual analysis. The NNC takes centre stage, but the reader is left to deduce to what extent the other role-players in the conflict contributed to the final outcome.

An example of this is his explanation of the role of the NNC at Isandlwana (which he refers to throughout as Sandlwana), both in its presence as the reconnaissance-in-force to the Mangeni area, and the battle itself. Although there is some detail of the role of Chelmsford, Durnford and the Zulu, there is little attempt to analyse their actions which led to the British defeat. As the book progresses there is less and less space devoted to the important battles and more attention is paid to events such as relatively minor raids into Zulu territory and the advance on Ulundi during the second invasion. Although these aspects of the war have some relevance, there is a disturbing imbalance which sometimes relegates major episodes and events, to minor ones.

It is unfortunate that the book contains no illustrations or photographs, but the sixteen maps included are useful. One can perhaps take issue with the accuracy of the labelling of the mountains in the map depicting the NNC in action in Matshana's territory, the size and detail of the British square at Ulundi, and the placement of British and Zulu forces in some instances, but overall they add value to the narrative.

The author succeeds in placing the origins of the NNC in the wider social and political context of the time and includes an interesting account of the various African groups of which the regiments in the war were comprised.

To what extent did the NNC contribute to the final victory of the British forces? In many analyses of the conflict the NNC, despite its large numbers, is regarded as an insignificant force which did more harm than good to the British cause. Thompson argues to the contrary, contending that the Native Contingent was indispensable to British victory. He argues that they were the eyes and ears of the British army in the field, serving as scouts and skirmishers, stalkers and harriers. Their lack of success as a purely fighting unit, he asserts, can be ascribed to the unsuccessful attempt to accustom them to the European regimental system and to unsympathetic white officers. Moreover, far from being cowards, as is often alleged, many of them performed acts of great personal bravery.

As the centenary of the Anglo-Boer War draws near, many readers of African military history will be turning their attention away from works on the Anglo-Zulu War. There nevertheless remains a loyal following of Anglo-Zulu War addicts who will want to augment their growing libraries. Despite some drawbacks, Thompson's work on the NNC adds considerable value to our understanding of the 1879 conflict and the role of the more than 8000 men who fought for a cause they perceived as just.

Copies of the book can be ordered directly from the author at the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg.

JEFF MATHEWS

**ZULU MEDICINAL PLANTS: AN INVENTORY**

ANN HUTCHINGS, ALAN HAXTON SCOTT, GILLIAN LEWIS, ANTHONY CUNNINGHAM.

University of Natal Press in association with the National Botanical Institute &amp; the University of Zululand. 1996. 450 pp. A4, soft cover, R241,00.

The dictionary defines an inventory as including a statement on every one of its itemisations, 'giving the nature and value of each'. This volume does not claim to offer more than provisional statements of this kind, hence its *raison d'être*: to provide a ready reference to 'what we have' on each plant's nature and value, preliminary to further work on a very under-researched subject. Readers should appreciate that very little fresh field information on the Zulu plant pharmacopoeia appears: the book's very publication presupposes an absence of the available facts in accessible form. The compilers have for the most part presented a literature review of works published both before and since the early 1960s, when Watt & Breyer-Brandwijk published their landmark *Medicinal and Poisonous Plants of Eastern and Southern Africa* (1962), the first encyclopaedic treatment of fully half the continent. The current work less updates this classic than complements it, given that it considers a much smaller geographic region, and accordingly a more limited set of plants and magico-medicinal practices. However, since many of the taxa detailed by Hutchings et al. are widely distributed throughout the southern African sub-region, this volume will prove useful to researchers working further afield.

Families and genera are arranged phylogenetically, and species listed alphabetically within. Where data is available, four information fields appear for each species profile. 'Zulu medicinal usage' draws on the earliest ethnographic work, by Fathers AT Bryant (1909) and Jacob Gerstner (1939); on popular publications — MM Hume's *Wild Flowers of Natal* (1954), Margaret Roberts' *Book of Herbs* (1983) and *Indigenous Healing Plants* (1990), and *Natur Africa: the Herbalist Handbook* (1990) by the late Jean Pujol; and on unpublished ethnographic data from the main author's fieldwork, in the form of personal communications from the likes of the late 'muthi' luminary MV Gumede and the Valley Trust group of healers, along with other Zulu and white informants, as well as data from a 'herbal history' survey of hospital patients.

A couple of very small quibbles would be that occasionally this kind of information is unattributed, and secondly, that since Doke & Vilakazi's 1972 *Zulu-English Dictionary* is used as an ethnographic source, the odd medicinal plant listed in the latest edition (1990, Wits UP) is missing. Herbarium collections in the region supply another source, and in the text, the genera are arranged in accordance with the numbering system followed by the National Herbarium (based on Dalla Torre & Harms). This allows for easy cross-referencing with most regional herbarium collections, as well as various international publications, particularly biosystematic works.

Of the other fields under each species, 'Other medicinal usage' often ranges outside Africa, while 'Physiological effects' and 'Chemical constituents and biological properties' can vary from a few lines to half a page. With some 37 pages of references to relevant literature, the book offers an impressive summary of the present state of scientific knowledge of plants used by the Zulu. To date, native

mastery of one of the subcontinent's richest sources of medicinal plants has been relatively poorly documented. With the great upsurge of interest worldwide in such 'tribal wisdoms', and the advent of ethnobotany and ethnopharmacology as interdisciplinary approaches to them, this important inventory's appearance can only be described as timely. It will be of value to researchers across the entire range of disciplines associated with ethnobotany, from anthropologists and linguists to natural products chemists.

One of the most useful features is the quick reference appendix, 'Table of Plant Usage', summarising present knowledge of the often multiple uses of each species by local cultures — here, Xhosa and Sotho as well as Zulu. A key codes for each taxon the relevant usage/s among 32 possible categories, from aphrodisiacs to animal medicine, physical ailments to antisorcery/trance induction. As with the main text body, the table is phylogenetically arranged, allowing the user to pick up patterns of usage and potential toxicity quickly within groups of related species. This feature is of particular benefit to ethnopharmacologists and organic chemists looking for ethno-directed research leads.

Equally valuable to the cultural anthropologist sifting for leads into uses either esoteric or lapsed, is the citing of Zulu names — sometimes up to five variations per species, all indexed — in addition to the scientific and common name indexes. Used in association with the family and genus indications, this can help target specific species for pharmacological investigation, by offering ethnolinguists the opportunity of an etymological approach (since names tend, in many if not most cases, to clue to principal action, and therefore to use). Etymology is a notoriously fraught method, but in the absence of a large fund of historical ethnographic data, and confronted with the undeniable dying-away of inherited traditions of use, here is at least one way forward. The inclusion of known botanical synonyms is welcomed, as it further facilitates access to literature past and present, as do the common names listed — though it must be said these may sometimes themselves generate confusion.

One caveat: given the limited detailed information offered on plant (mixture) preparations and dosage, the book is unlikely to prove directly useful to healers, and accordingly may receive criticism from this quarter. The absence of illustrations does alert one to the fact that a non-scientific readership is not really intended, and indeed there is a prefatory caution against indiscriminate experimental use. But with the stimulus this book has already given, since publication last year, to natural products research and to ethnopharmacological and toxicological investigations in South Africa, it may already be rendering the healer community invaluable service. In providing further scientific support to validate traditional claims, current research is facilitating (albeit slowly) the incorporation of traditional healing systems into the formal health care sector.

In short, this book serves a broad research and medical community in the region, and as an imposing contribution to future ethnobotanical research, it will likely find a prized place on many an academic's shelf. However, with a limited print run of fewer than 2 000 copies, and a reasonable price, it is unlikely to remain available for very much longer.

NEIL CROUCH & ROBERT PAPINI

**ZULU POTENTATES — From the earliest to Zwelithini KaBhekuzulu**

By M Z SHAMASE

Durban, S.M. Publications, 1996. 170pp., illus., soft cover, R74,20

Perhaps produced with the school and college market in mind, this book is clearly intended to present the general reader with a convenient source of basic information about the genealogy and lives of the eight Zulu kings from Shaka to the present monarch, Zwelithini. It deals with various issues surrounding their reigns, and in the case of the present king, deals frankly with previous state policies towards the monarchy, the pressures placed on the king, and the political tensions created — tensions which still affect the political life of KwaZulu-Natal. An appendix in fact contains the texts of various recent memoranda and agreements between political entities. The chapters are illustrated with photographs or drawings of key figures and important occasions, and genealogical tables, and the author includes a translation of the *izibongo* of King Zwelithini

Serious historians may question some of the assumptions and assertions made at various points throughout the text. Also, the book would have benefited from more imaginative typesetting — basic word-processing capacity should enable a publisher to avoid underlinings in lieu of italics — and more careful editing would have eliminated the many typographical and other lapses.