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Sabela had sons Ngutshana and Ntshangase - were twins. In the house which lablaid Sabela on his dying there were his sons Mtwana and Scolo - ^{House of the} ^{of the} Esizindeni Kraal. The principal sons were Ngutshana & Ntshangase. Macci and Jali were also Sabela's sons. Nzimakwe was a younger brother of Scolo. Mboti was to be killed by Mtwana, lived a Mzinto & it happened in the Mzinto ^{in the Mzinto} Mboti's father and mother were killed ^(Mzinto River) impafane for not vulclaming invula preventing rain. killed in aman Tolweni (tribe). Mboti aged with his sister Myalwana (she afterwards bore the amafalo & amadiba kwa Mdanitsha - emzambaba (river beyond mtamvuma in Pondoland). Mboti ahlaid down in Komazi ^{river} lobasing izimhlambi and imbokane - and eating them - be dingile (in a state of need or starvation) - they came on to Mzinto

Figure 1 (opposite). One of James Stuart's handwritten pages of notes of his conversation with Mahaya kaNongqabana. James Stuart Collection, file 62, p.7, nbk. 77. Campbell Collections of the University of KwaZulu-Natal

The Historiography of the KwaMachi People: A Frontier Community between Zulu and Mpondo in the Nineteenth Century

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Emlandweni nje, asiyazi into ebeyihlanganisa u Machi nezinto zakwaZulu, nemhlanganisa nezinto zangaphesheya emaMpondweni. UMachi ubefana ne 'island in a way'. Kwaze ke kwafika lezinto zama homelands, uMachi became part of amakhosi structures. UXolo yena wayebanga kakhulu, kwase kukhethwa yena uMachi ePhalamente lakwaZulu. Buthelezi's struggle besisebenza kakhulu ngamaKhosi.

In history, we have never known a thing that connects KwaMachi with either KwaZulu or Mpondoland. KwaMachi was like an island in a way. The homeland system came; Machi became part of the amakhosi structures. Xolo was contesting a lot. Inkosi Machi got chosen by KwaZulu parliament to represent amakhosi. Buthelezi's struggle went smoothly through amakhosi [Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi is president of Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), a KwaZulu-Natal-based political organisation].¹

The above quotation not only illuminates the unique and intricate history of the Machi chiefdom, which is the focus of this essay, but also highlights the fundamental argument of this study.² This is a historiography essay that challenges arguments for deeper and fixed identities as the basis of most communities.³ The province of KwaZulu-Natal is often associated with popular notions of ethnic history that see all Africans living in it as Zulu. This universal outlook not only fails to acknowledge the significance of the history of pre-Shakan communities, it also does not take into consideration borderland communities whose history has been shifting in time and who should be understood in terms of their unique history. Using KwaMachi as a case study, this essay asserts that border zones are not places where identities are sealed and where new ones are formed. They are localities where social spaces are reformulated, mixed and hybridised in the formation of a borderland community. I argue on the basis of archival and oral research

1 I conducted the interviews referred to in this essay. My chief informants were KwaMachi community residents older than 60 from all levels of the community. The choice of informants was determined mainly by age. Many of them came from low-income families, were semi- or non-literate and without a high profile in the community. The epigraph is taken from an interview with J.T.N., Pietermaritzburg, July 2003. J.T.N. was born at KwaMachi and now lives in Margate. He holds no leadership position at KwaMachi.

2 I define 'chiefdom' in this context as a political entity in a geographical area under the administration of an inkosi (chief, plural amakhosi). Machi is the name of the founder of the chiefdom and KwaMachi the name of the chiefdom on the southern border of KwaZulu-Natal.

3 This essay formed part of my PhD thesis research work completed in 2006 and published as N. Cele, 'The Historiography of the KwaMachi People: A Frontier Community between AmaZulu and AmaMpondo in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* 27, 2009: 1-21.