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ANNALS

OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN
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(continued inside back cover)

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ANNALS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUM
ANNALE VAN DIE SUID-AFRIKAANSE MUSEUM

VOLUME 70 BAND



THE TRUSTEES OF THE
SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUM
CAPE TOWN

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SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUM

VOLUME 70

ANNALE VAN DIE
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BAND 70

SOME NGUNI CRAFTS

PREFACE

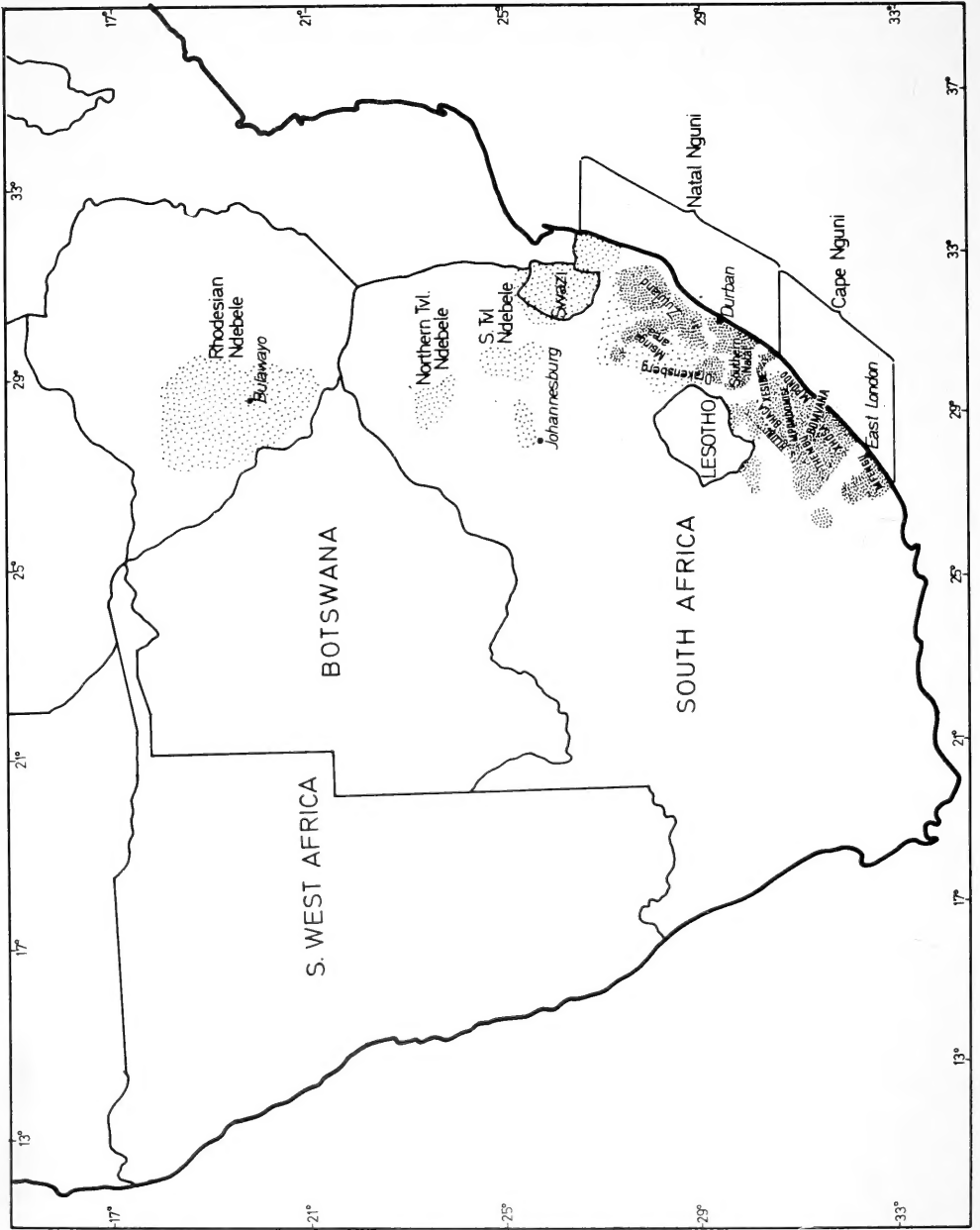
This study is one of a series which will include certain crafts of all the Bantu-speaking people of southern Africa, south of the Zambezi. Pottery and basketwork have been studied at this Museum (Lawton, A. C. 1967. Bantu Pottery of Southern Africa. *Ann. S. Afr. Mus.* 49: 1-440; and Shaw, E. M. Basketwork of Southern Africa, MS.). The present project deals with some other major and minor crafts.

The practice of crafts formed an integral part of the traditional self-supporting way of life of the people. To a certain extent it still does form a part, but it is declining rapidly as the availability of manufactured goods increases everywhere. Traditional crafts have been changing ever since European wares became available and some have died out completely. It is essential therefore to record what is left today, against a background of past practice, some idea of which can be obtained in some cases only from the literature and from museum specimens. In cases where the crafts are no longer practised the latter may be the only evidence of their former existence.

Field-work was undertaken in the Nguni areas of the Ciskei and Transkei, Natal and Zululand, Swaziland, the Transvaal and Rhodesia. The work would have benefited from a longer period in the field, but this was not possible and it is realized that there are many gaps. All the major collections in southern African museums have been examined, and in addition some large collections in European museums have been visited. It is hoped that the literature search has been exhaustive. The sources used are indicated in brackets in the text with date of publication of literature, museum registration number with locality and date of acquisition or date of field investigation.

While the research team as a whole has been involved in all sections, the principal author is indicated for each paper.

E. M. SHAW
Project leader



INTRODUCTION

For several hundred years the home of the Nguni branch of the southern Bantu-speaking peoples has been the eastern and southern coast of South Africa between the Drakensberg and the sea and stretching from Swaziland to the Fish River. The main divisions of the Nguni are the Cape or Southern Nguni in the Transkeian and Ciskeian territories, the Nguni of Natal and Zululand, the Swazi, the Ndebele of the Transvaal and the Ndebele (Matabele) of Rhodesia. Other offshoots from the Natal Nguni, such as the Tshangana of Mozambique and the Ngoni of Malawi have not been included in this study. The former will be included in a study of the crafts among the Tsonga people amongst whom they settled, and the Ngoni are north of the Zambezi and thus outside the area of study.

THE CAPE NGUNI

The people of the Southern Nguni include the Xhosa, Thembu, Bomvana, Mpondomise and Mpondo, whose ancestors were already settled within the area now known as the Transkeian Territories by the end of the sixteenth century, and the Mfengu (Fingo), Hlubi, Xesibe and Bhaca, who entered the same area when they were forced, either directly by the activities of Shaka or by the pressures that his campaigns set up, to move out of the territories they had inhabited in Natal. They began to arrive in the area in the 1820s. (Wilson 1969: 345-6).

Field visits

The Southern Nguni tribes had been visited in 1948, 1955, 1961 and 1962 and during this survey brief visits were made to Libode (Mpondo), Tsolo (Mpondomise), Engcobo (Thembu), Kentani (Xhosa) in June 1969, to Mount Frere (Bhaca) and Mount Ayliff (Xesibe) in August 1969, and to Kentani (Xhosa) in 1971.

THE NATAL NGUNI

In the 1820s the Nguni in Natal came under the military domination of the Zulu tribe, which rose to power under Shaka. Many tribes were scattered far and wide. Some fled to the Cape as mentioned above. In addition some of Shaka's generals led military groups out of Natal. One such was Mzilikazi who eventually settled in Rhodesia and founded the Matabele nation; another, Shoshangane, settled his group in southern Mozambique; while Zwangendaba went further north and his group eventually settled in Malawi.

Field visits

The Natal Nguni were visited in 1969, 1970, and 1971. The following districts were visited: Bulwer (Khuseni), Bergville (Ngwane, Zizi), Msinga (Mabaso) and Nqutu (Zulu) in August 1969; Hlabisa (Zulu), Mahlabatini (Buthelezi), Melmoth (Biyela), Nongoma (Zulu) and Ubombo in August 1970; Babanango (Zulu), Mahlabatini (Mkize), Nkandla (Biyela, Shezi) and Nongoma (Zulu) in

August 1971. In the text a division has been made where possible between Zululand, Msinga, Drakensberg and southern Natal, on the basis of geographical distribution and observed differences in material culture.

THE SWAZI

The branch of the Nguni which eventually settled in the present Swaziland and adjacent areas moved into the region of Delagoa Bay under chief Dlamini, founder of the royal Swazi clan. During the eighteenth century Ngwane III led the Dlamini people across the Lubombo Mountains and built his capital at Lobamba, which is still the capital today. Later chiefs consolidated and expanded the nation, which became known as the Swazi during the reign of Mswati II.

Field visits

The Swazi had been visited in 1962 and during this survey were visited in the districts of Ubombo, Mbabane, Manzini, Pigg's Peak, Mankaiana and Enqabaneni in August 1971.

THE TRANSVAAL NDEBELE

The Ndebele of the central and northern Transvaal are related to the Nguni of Natal, but through a long period of residence among the Sotho people have been greatly influenced by Sotho culture, particularly the Laka, Maune, Moletlane and Hwaduba tribes in the north. The Ndzundza (also known as Mapoch) and Manala further south have retained more Nguni characteristics.

Field visits

The southern Transvaal Ndebele (Ndzundza) in the Groblersdal district were visited in August 1967 and May 1972, and those in the Nebo district in May 1972 and May 1973.

The northern Transvaal Ndebele in the Zebediela (Moletlane) and Pietersburg (Maune) districts were visited in August 1967 and May 1972.

THE NDEBELE OF RHODESIA

The Ndebele of Rhodesia were made up of the original settlers from Natal under Mzilikazi, of those who joined him on his way through the Transvaal and Botswana, and of those who were assimilated in Rhodesia. Their descendants live in Matabeleland today.

Field visits

The Rhodesian Ndebele had been visited in southern Matabeleland in 1967 and during this survey were visited in Tjolotjo and Essexvale in May 1973.

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ANNALE VAN DIE SUID-AFRIKAANSE MUSEUM

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May 1976 Mei
Part 1 Deel



SOME NGUNI CRAFTS
PART 1
CALABASHES

By

H. E. BÖHME

Cape Town Kaapstad

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SOME NGUNI CRAFTS

PART 1

CALABASHES

By

H. E. BÖHME

South African Museum, Cape Town

(With 57 figures)

[MS. accepted 10 September 1975]

ABSTRACT

Calabashes are widely used by the Nguni. The cultivation, preparation and use by the main Nguni groups are described and differences in practice noted. The preparation of calabashes is not a specialist craft.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	1
Cape Nguni	2
Natal Nguni	31
Swazi	55
Southern Transvaal Ndebele	60
Northern Transvaal Ndebele	65
Rhodesian Ndebele	67
Discussion	73
Acknowledgements	75
References	75
Abbreviations	78

INTRODUCTION

A calabash is a vessel or container made from the hard-shelled fruit of the gourd, a trailing plant. The hard-shelled fruits of certain other plants, mainly trees, have been included in this survey, because their use is essentially the same. Calabashes and fruit-shells are used as containers and household utensils.

Availability

Gourds. The gourd belongs to the Family Cucurbitaceae and there are two species of *Lagenaria* which are possibly indigenous to tropical Africa, and appear to be the only ones to produce the gourds used as household utensils.

1. *Lagenaria siceraria* (Molina) Standl (formerly *Lagenaria vulgaris*). Various forms of this species are known as the bottle gourd or club gourd (*uselwa* (Doke & Vilakazi 1964)).
2. *Lagenaria mascarena* Naud. This has a small fruit and is cultivated for snuff-

boxes and medicine flasks. It was cultivated and described in Mauritius hence the name, but it is said to be indigenous to East Tropical Africa.

The fruits grow into various shapes, the most common of which are globular, flask-shaped, long-necked and the double-bowl or waisted type (Fig. 1). The Nguni do not rely on wild plants, but cultivate gourds of different sizes, if the soil and climate are suitable. Doke & Vilakazi (1964) give more Zulu terms which depict the different types of gourds used, and which probably overlap with the above-mentioned species or shapes:

usololo — variety of hard-shelled gourd or pumpkin.

iyelési — thin-shelled gourd.

isibobodla— calabash with a large-sized hole or mouth.

isihlali — medium-sized calabash.

Fruit-shells. The small, hard-shelled fruits of certain indigenous plants (Family Flacourtiaceae) are also used as containers. The two most generally used fruits are the Kaffir Orange or *ihlala* (Xhosa, Zulu) which is the fruit of the *umhlala* tree (*Strychnos spinosa* Lam.) and the *ithongwane* (Zulu) which is the fruit of the Snuff-box tree, *umthongwane* (*Oncoba spinosa* Forsk.). According to Marloth (1925: 194) 'the shell of the fruit is employed by the natives as a snuff-box, called "thunga"'. For the most part the Nguni rely on wild trees and do not cultivate them, but may protect such as grow in the area.

Practitioners

There is no specialization in the preparation of calabashes and they are grown by most families. Because they are domestic utensils they are usually prepared by women. No rituals or taboos are attached to their preparation.

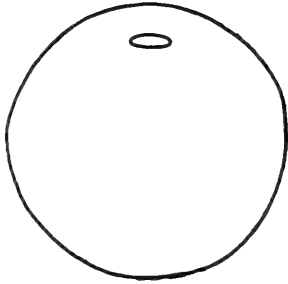
CAPE NGUNI

CULTIVATION

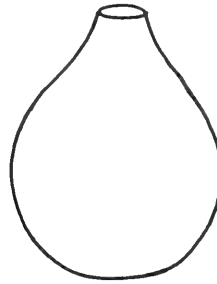
The gourds grow along the ground (Fig. 2) and Mpondo informants at Nxukhwube (Libode, 1969) stated that they were supported with something flat to prevent damage to the fruit. Calabashes were grown domestically but not all soil was suitable for all sorts of gourds. At Nxukhwube (Libode, 1969) it was said that the 'snuff-box' size calabash was scarce as this type was not as easy to cultivate as the larger type. Apart from the suitability of the soil, the cultivation of gourds depended on favourable climatic conditions. A Bhaca informant at Lutateni (Mount Frere, 1969) stated that no calabashes were available that year on account of the drought. Mpondo at Lwandile (Ngqeleni, 1969) and Mpondomise at Tshixo (Tsolo, 1969) also said that due to the severe drought there had been a poor crop.

PREPARATION

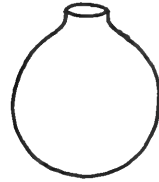
McLaren (1919: 445) described calabash preparation among the Xhosa. 'The calabash-gourd, *uselwa*, with its long neck, was gathered when quite ripe,



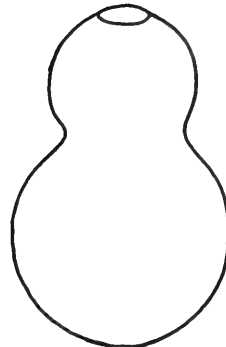
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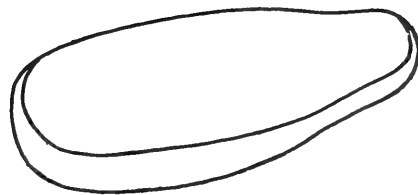
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Type 3



Type 4



Type 5

Fig. 1. Shapes of calabashes. Type 1: Globular. Type 2: Flask-shaped. Type 3: Long-necked. Type 4: Double bowl or waisted calabash. Type 5: Elongated.



Fig. 2. Calabash growing, Mpondo, Ngqeleni.

and was then sunk, *nyiwa*, in the ground for a time, with only the neck sticking out, by which means the rind was hardened while the contents decayed so that they could be emptied out. The inside was thoroughly cleaned by rinsing it with water and gravel. It was then fit for use as a milk-container, *iselwa*. The calabash was often tied round, *tandela*, with string or thong to strengthen it. A mealie cob, *um-pa*, served as a cork.⁷

Makalima (1945: chap. 9 para. 8) gives a similar account to McLaren's on the preparation of calabashes among the Thembu and Mpondomise except that he does not record that the calabash was buried to harden the rind. A stick was used to remove the flesh from the gourd.

Field information regarding the preparation of the gourd differs little from the information obtained in the literature except that there is no other record of the gourd being buried.

The Mpondo at Libode (1969) cleaned the calabash as follows: when the calabash was dry a hole was cut in the top with a knife; gravel and water were put into it and shaken to clean the inner surface.

Among the Mpondomise (Mjika, Tsolo, 1969) warm water was used. The hole was closed with the hand and the gourd well shaken.

The Bhaca (Mount Frere, 1969) used a hot tang of a hoe blade to make a hole which pierced the length of the neck of the gourd. Dry mealie seeds were put inside and shaken to clean the interior.

Among the Mfengu (Sotho location, 1971) a piece was cut off the top, narrow end of the gourd before it was left to dry out. The inside was allowed to rot

and the pips were loosened with a stick. To remove the contents the calabash was shaken and turned upside down. Water was added to swill it out.

No information was obtained about the methods of the Bomvana, Hlubi and Xesibe.

DECORATION

Information in the literature concerning the decoration of calabashes is very sketchy and confined to Xhosa and Mpondo only. Backhouse (1894: 263) mentioned a 'decorated' gourd penis-sheath but did not describe it. Fritsch (1872: 58) recorded that penis-sheaths were incised or painted. Both Lucas (1861: 6) and Kropf (1889: 103) saw gourd snuff-boxes 'ornamented with beads'. They did not, however, supply more detailed information.

Museum specimens of calabashes show many variations in style and decoration. The calabashes made into snuff-boxes, penis-sheaths, cosmetic bottles and medicine flasks were nearly always decorated. Decoration of gourds can be divided into several techniques:

- Type 1.* Branded: SAM-6928, snuff-box, Xhosa, 1871-86 (Fig. 3A).
- Type 2.* Covered with incised designs: SAM-6105, snuff-box, Cape Nguni, 1939 (Fig. 3B).
- Type 3.* Painted: EL 2803, East London, 1928, a Mfengu penis-sheath which is further decorated by the attachment of a brass bell on a narrow chain.
- Type 4a.* Covered with beads: snuff-boxes: SAM-5624, Tsolo, 1936 (Fig. 4), and SAM-4981, Cala district, 1933 (Fig. 5).
- Type 4b.* Covered with beadwork: snuff-box: SAM-10093, Transkei, 1971 (Fig. 6).



A

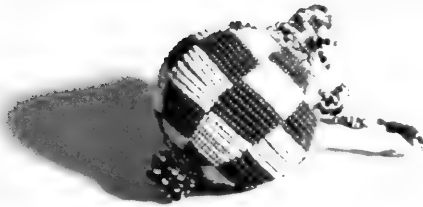
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Fig. 3. A. Xhosa snuff-box, 1871-86, SAM-6928.

**B**

CM.

Fig. 3. B. Cape Nguni snuff-box, no locality, 1939, SAM-6105.



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Fig. 4. Mpondomise snuff-box, Tsolo, 1936, SAM-5624.



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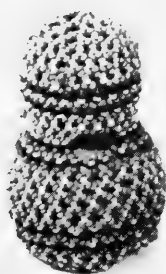
Fig. 5. Thembu snuff-box, Cala district, 1933,
SAM-4981.

The phrase 'covered with beads' indicates that the beads are strung on loose strings supported by vertical columns. The phrase 'covered with beadwork' indicates that the beads are strung in such a way that it looks like a tightly woven fabric.

REPAIR

There is no description in the literature of repairing a calabash but good examples have been seen in various museums. A hole in a calabash resonator for a Thembu bow was mended by placing a piece of gourd rind in the hole and then sewing it to the calabash with a two-ply fibre (SAM-6933, Transkei, 1948) (Fig. 7).

A Bomvana calabash (NASKO 35/431, Gusi location, Elliotdale, 1970) was mended with a two-ply twisted fibre cord in the following way: one row of holes was made on either side of the crack, using an awl. Two threads were used: the darning thread and a 'working' thread, used only to pull the darning thread through the holes as the opening of the calabash was too narrow for the hand to retrieve the darning thread from the inside of the calabash. The darning thread was pushed through a hole (Fig. 8(i) Hole A) at the top of the break and the 'working' thread was pushed through the corresponding hole (Hole B) on the opposite side of the break. There were loose ends of thread both on the inside and outside of the calabash. The worker took a stick with a hook attached and, inserting it at the top of the calabash, pulled the two loose ends of the darning and the 'working' thread out. The two ends were twined together, not knotted, by placing them side by side on the leg of the worker and rolling them between the palm of the hand and the leg. The loose end of the working thread (Hole B,



CM. 

Fig. 6. Cape Nguni snuff-box, no locality, 1971, SAM-10093.

on the outside of the calabash) was pulled, thereby pulling the darning thread through Hole B. The darning thread was pulled till its loose end (Hole A) hung out a short distance (Fig. 8(ii)). The darning and the 'working' thread could now be untwined on the outside of the calabash and the process started again (Fig. 8(iii)), the darning thread being inserted into Hole C and the 'working' thread into the corresponding Hole D; they were twined together, the loose end of the working thread was pulled, thereby pulling the darning thread through Hole D. When the end of the break had been reached, the darning thread was used to darn across the sewing. This was repeated back and forth until a sturdy reinforcement had been made (Fig. 9).

An Abelungu calabash (NASKO 35/384, Gusi location, Elliotdale, 1935) was mended by darning sedge across strands of fibre laid along the break. (Fig. 10).

A Mfengu calabash (Albany Museum, Grahamstown, 1950) was repaired with 'uluzi' fibre (Wild Fig tree: *Ficus natalensis* Hochst.). The mend was covered with a paste made from finely powdered asparagus leaves and sand (Fig. 11).

At a Sotho location (Haga Haga, Ciskei, 1971) an awl, *isilanda*, was used to make the holes through which the *uluzi* was pushed by means of a piece of wire. The sewing went across the crack only—not in both directions. Bhaca (Sihlahleni, Mount Frere, 1969) repaired a calabash by stitching on a piece of calabash with twine. Holes were made in the shell with an awl, *isungulu*, consisting of the spoke of an umbrella sharpened with a stone.

USES

MILK-FLASKS

Terms: *igula*—a species of milk calabash so called from the noise made by fermentation in it (Kropf 1915); *igula*—Hlubi: Sigoga, Matatiele district, 1961; Bhaca: Entlabeni, Mgunu-

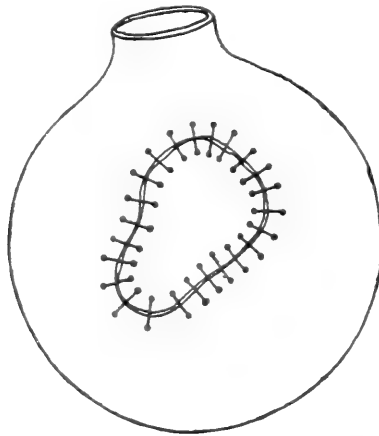


Fig. 7. Calabash repair.

ndlovu, Mount Frere, 1969; *indhliwa*—flask-shaped calabash for sour milk, Mpondo, Mbotyi, 1935; *imbikata*—calabash for sour milk (Cook 1931: 49, 50); *iselwa*—a calabash that has been dried and perfectly cleaned out; it is then used for holding *amasi* (Kropf 1915); *uselwa*—the calabash, when growing (Kropf 1915); *itjubuka*—*hlonipha* word for *iselwa* used by circumcised boys (Soga 1932: 210).

Xhosa

The use of milk-flasks among the Xhosa has been recorded by a number of writers (Shaw 1829: 129; Ayliff 1855, MS. 2; Kay 1833: 122; Steedman 1835: 263; Döhne 1837: 30; Kropf 1889: 101–102; Von Winkelman 1932: 75; Duggan-Cronin 1939: 28; Fox 1939: 73). Fox gave the most detailed description: ‘The warm milk is poured straight from the milking into a calabash already containing a little *amasi*. A common sight at midday at the kraals, whilst milking is proceeding, is an array of calabashes waiting in the sun to be filled. . . . If they separates, it is drunk as *intloya* especially in hot weather to quench thirst whilst the hard curd is termed *ingqaka*. If the product is too sour it is mixed with fresh milk.’

He added that calabashes should be washed out every two weeks or once a month but not too often.

Special calabashes were used for children. For a journey the child’s calabash was encased in a net to make it easier for the mother to carry.

The milk-flasks were sometimes stopped with a mealie-cob stopper (Kampini, Tshabo, King William’s Town, 1969).

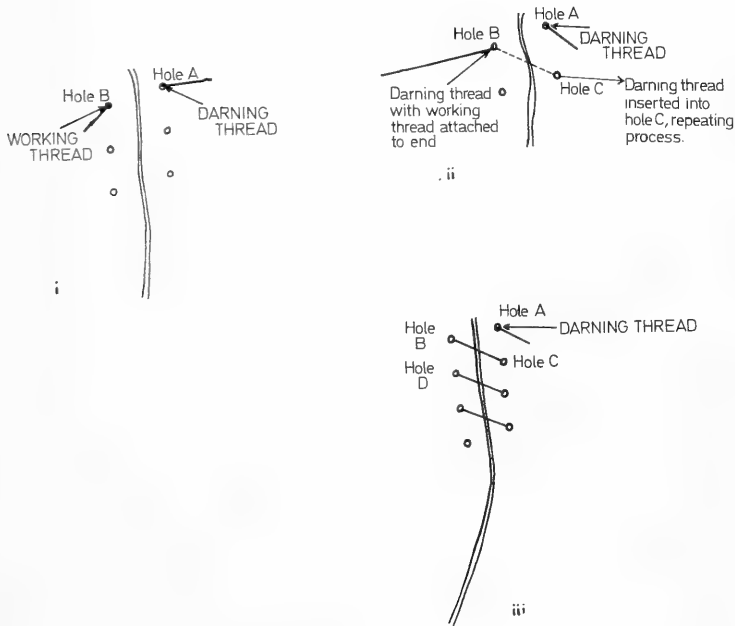


Fig. 8. Method of repairing crack.

Thembu

Milk calabashes were stored in the hut of the head of the homestead and had their special place opposite the door (Makalima 1945: chap. 8 para. 22).

A photograph in Kidd (1925: 59) shows an *abakwetha* carrying his calabash.

Big flask-shaped calabashes were seen in use among the Thembu at Qebe Valley (Engcobo, 1969).

Bomvana

Among the Bomvana the mother, on the fifth day after giving birth to a child, was given a separate calabash, *imbikata*, of sour milk which was kept in her



CM. 

Fig. 9. Bomvana milk calabash, showing mend, Gusi location, Elliotdale, 1935, NASKO 35/431.

own hut. When the baby started to consume *amasi* it was also given an *imbikata* (Cooke 1931: 49–50).

Holt (1969: 218) in 1968 did not see a milk calabash in use among the Tshezi. 'They spoke of it with a sigh, as only a pleasant memory.'

The Bomvana calabash (NASKO 35/431, Gusi location, Elliotdale, 1935) whose repair was described above was used for milk. It is flask-shaped and has a stopper. Another repaired milk calabash (NASKO 35/384, Gusi location, Elliotdale, 1935) has a mealie-cob stopper and a twisted sedge carrying net.

Mpondo

Kidd (1925: 59) recorded that directly after milking the sweet milk was placed in the milk sack or calabash. He maintained that the calabash was never cleaned out, but contained a strong ferment which resulted in the immediate clotting of the milk. The calabash had a small plug at the bottom by which the whey was let off, the curds being the more important part. In general, calabashes



CM. 

Fig. 10. Bomvana milk calabash, showing mend, Gusi location, Elliotdale, 1935, NASKO 35/384.

were used for sour milk, but he stressed the fact that sweet milk was given to babies whereas sour milk was food for men. Hunter (1936: 157), however, stated that sweet milk was never given to a baby except under European influence.

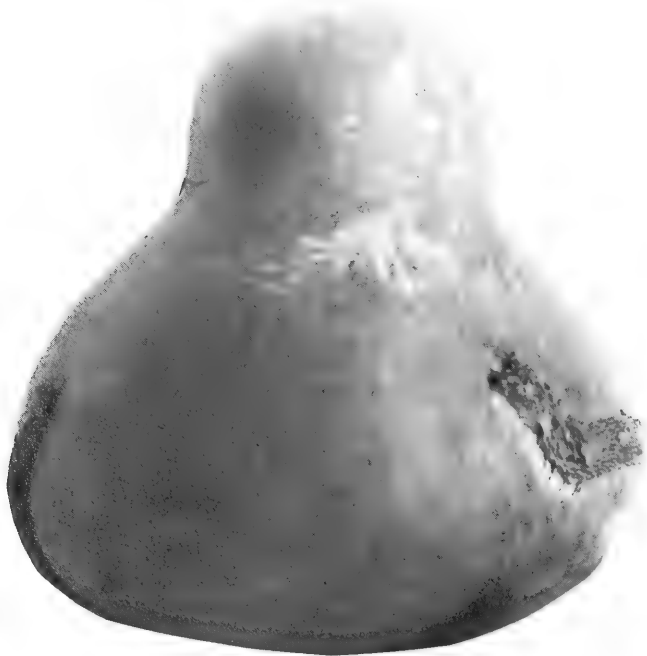
According to Hunter (1936: 46) the milk calabashes had their own place in the hut. They were kept on the men's side of the hut, but the individual calabashes of grandchildren were sometimes hung on the women's side of the hut so that the mothers had easier access to them.

A museum specimen of a sour milk calabash, *indhliwa* (NASKO 35/453, Mbotyi location), has a bark carrying net (Fig. 12). Milk calabashes were seen at Nxukhwube, Libode, 1969. It was said that small sizes of calabashes were used by children as they were easier to handle. It was also said that if calabashes in use were sold the owner would be driving away the cattle. This, however, may have been an excuse for not selling calabashes (Dikela Village, Libode, 1969).

Similar information as to the use of milk calabashes was gained at Emamholweni and Lwandile, 1969.

Mpondomise

At Tshixo, (Tsolo 1969), the large type of calabash was used for sour milk.



CM. 

Fig. 11. Mfengu milk calabash, showing mend, 'Aylesby', Cape, 1950, Albany Museum.

Mfengu

In 1824 the Amazizi (Mfengu), were using large wide-mouthed calabashes as containers for cow's milk (Ross quoted in Long 1947 : 212). There are specimens at the South African Museum (SAM-10026 (Fig. 13) and 10027 (Fig. 14), Sotho location, Haga Haga, 1971); and at the Albany Museum (no number, 'Aylesby', Cape, 1950).

Bhaca

Hammond-Tooke (1962: 116) recorded that one of the milk taboos of the Bhaca prohibited ritually impure people from touching the milk calabashes. Even if a calabash of sour milk was full and fermented so that the milk overflowed, the specific person could not do anything about it but had to call some



CM. 

Fig. 12. Mpondo milk calabash, Mbotyi location, Pondoland, 1935. NASKO 35/453.

other resident of the homestead to help him. This applied, for example, to women subject to *hlonipha* rules, menstruating women, diviners or boys going through initiation or puberty rites.

A Bhaca milk-flask (SAM-9625, 1969) was obtained at Entlabeni, Mount Frere (Fig. 15).

Hlubi, Xesibe

No information on the use of milk calabashes by the Hlubi or Xesibe was obtained in the literature, museum collections or field.

WATER AND BEER FLASKS

Terms: *isigubu*—a bowl out of which beer is drunk; *iselwa*—(Kropf 1915).

Xhosa

There are various brief references in the literature to the use of calabashes to store water and beer, and the dictionary reference to a drinking-vessel (Kropf 1889: 99; Holden 1963: 226; Elliott 1970: 55).

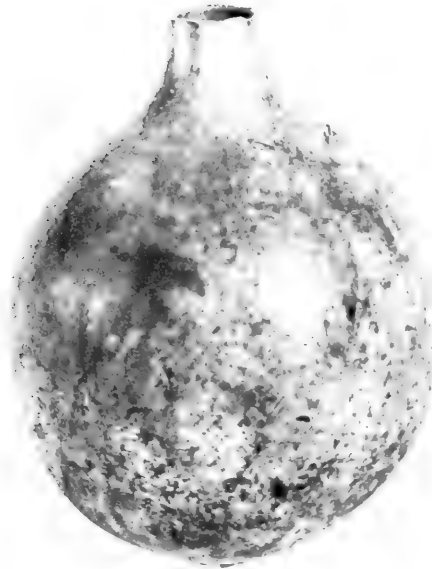


Fig. 13. Mfengu milk calabash, Sotho location, Haga Haga, Ciskei, 1971, SAM-10026

No museum specimens were seen nor was any information obtained in the field.

Mpondo

Water and beer calabashes were observed in use among the Mpondo at Nxukhwube, Libode, 1969.

No information was obtained in the literature nor in museum collections.

Thembu, Bomvana, Mpondomise, Mfengu, Hlubi, Bhaca, Xesibe

No information was obtained in the literature, museum collections nor in



CM. 

Fig. 14. Mfengu milk calabash, Sotho location, Haga Haga, Ciskei, 1971, SAM-10027.

the field concerning the use of water and beer calabashes among the other Cape Nguni tribes.

COSMETIC FLASKS

Terms: (a) *ihlala*—a pot or small vessel for keeping any fatty substance for anointing the head or person. (b) The fruit of the *umhlala*; (*umhlala*—the Kaffir Orange, *Strychnos spinosa* Lam.) (Kropf 1915).

A calabash cosmetic flask was frequently used as a churn to produce the fat that was afterwards kept in it.

Xhosa

The butter that the *abakhwetha* used to smear on their bodies after their seclusion was made by skimming the cream off the milk and shaking it in a calabash (De Lange 1963: 89). The calabash in which it was stored was thus used as both a churn and a cosmetic flask.



Fig. 15. Bhaca milk calabash, Entlabeni, Mount Frere, 1969, SAM-9625.

Thembu

Thembu informants stated that fat for smearing on the body was preserved in calabashes which kept it fresh and sweet smelling (Qebe Valley, Engcobo, 1969).

No other information was found in the literature or museums.

Mpondo

According to both Poto Ndamase (1927: 123) and Hunter (1936: 223) a calabash was used as a churn to make butter for cosmetic purposes.

The Mpondo (Nxukhwube, Libode, 1969) stated that small gourds were used to store fat. Pork fat was smeared on their hair but was used also for softening sheepskins for blankets worn as cloaks.

Mpondomise

Among the Mpondomise the fruit of the Kaffir Orange was used to make cosmetic containers (Tsolo, 1969).

Bomvana, Mfengu, Hlubi, Xesibe, Bhaca

No further information was found in the literature, museums or field concerning the use of cosmetic flasks among the Cape Nguni.

MEDICINE FLASKS

Thembu

Among the Thembu (Qebe Valley, Engcobo, 1969) diviners and herbalists used small calabashes to keep their medicines in.

Bomvana

According to Holt (1969: 321, 322), persons intending to do harm carried about little calabashes with medicine and they blew them in the direction of those they wished to harm. A herbalist was then engaged to counteract this by blowing some medicine out of his calabash toward the affected person. Holt saw an apprentice herbalist wearing two beautifully bead-covered calabashes over his 'western' clothes.

Mpondo

Müller (1907: 769) stated that before divining, the diviner placed the divining bones in a calabash, shook the container and then emptied the bones on the ground. The divination was made according to the way they fell.

A Mpondo hunter's charm in the Hamilton-Welsh collection (HW 84, 1935) consists of a black gourd containing charms. This particular specimen is said to have been owned by a man born in 1856 who had found it in the thatch of an old hut in Pondoland.

From information obtained from a storekeeper at Qokama Store, Ngqeleni, 1969, it seemed that because the small calabashes were scarce in the district they were mainly used by diviners, probably to hold medicines or snuff

Mpondomise

A Mpondomise diviner seen at Tshixo (Tsolo, 1969), wore a bandolier with a beaded calabash in which he kept snuff or medicine.

A similar type of bandolier was also worn by young men at their dance *intlombe* (Tshixo, Tsolo, 1969).

Xesibe

Among the Xesibe (Sigidini location, Mount Ayliff, 1969) a bead-covered calabash containing medicine was seen.

Xhosa, Mfengu, Hlubi, Bhaca

No information was obtained concerning the use of calabashes for medicine flasks among the Xhosa, Mfengu, Bhaca and Hlubi.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

1. *Musical bow*

Terms: *igubu*—‘A dried calabash, prepared for use as a musical instrument, connected by a bow to a single string, which is beaten and resounds in the calabash with a sound like gubu gubu . . .’ (Kropf 1915); *uhadi*—musical bow with calabash resonator (*igubu*). Compare with the word *umhadi*, meaning ‘a deep pit’ (Kirby 1934: 197).

Xhosa

Among the Xhosa a gourd or fruit-shell prepared in the same way as described above was used generally for the resonator (*igubu*) of the musical bow. The instrument consisted of a wooden stave which was retained in position by a string of either sinew, horse’s tail hair or wire. The calabash was attached to the stave at the middle (Plant 1931: 97) or near the lower end (Kirby 1934: 198). A pad of cloth or bark acted as an insulator to prevent friction between the calabash and the bow. Kirby (1934: 198, 201) mentioned that the Xhosa, Thembu and Mpondo all used a form of musical bow but he did not describe the instruments. A Xhosa musical bow in the South African Museum collection (SAM-9425, Tshabo location, King William’s Town, 1968) has a cloth pad between the bow and the resonator which is attached by a string through two holes in its base (Fig. 16).

Thembu

A Thembu specimen (SAM-6933, Transkei, 1948) has a sinew knotted through a single hole in the base of the calabash to tie it to the bow-stave. A grass ring cushions the calabash against the stave.

Mpondo

A Mpondo musical bow (SAM-6681, Lusikisiki, 1948 (Fig. 17)) has a calabash resonator which is cut off half-way down. This specimen has no cushion or cloth pad. A loop of sinew ties the resonator to the bow. A second specimen of a



Fig. 16. Xhosa musical bow, Tshabo location, King William's Town, 1968, SAM-9425.



Fig. 17. Mpondo musical bow, Lusikisiki, 1948, SAM-6681.

Mpondo bow (UCT 23/168) has the calabash resonator cut off at the base of the neck, and a pad of ochred cloth is packed between the resonator and the stave. A two-ply sinew thread passes through two holes in the calabash and secures it to the bow. Musical bows with calabash resonators are still seen today.

2. Drum

Xhosa

Moodie (1835: 250–251) recorded the use of the calabash as a drum among the Xhosa. It was played in the Fish River area in the 1820s. It was used as an accompaniment to the singing and clapping of the women and the dancing of the men, but he gave no description of the drum.

Kirby (1934: 19) stated that it was probably borrowed by the Xhosa from the Hottentots 'for such a drum is quite unknown among them [the Xhosa], and is radically different from the percussion instruments used by them in their ceremonies'.

No specimens were found in museums nor seen in the field.

3. *Rattle*

Terms: *imiguzu*—gourd rattles which were worn around the waist (Kirby 1934: 7).

Xhosa

According to Kirby the principal variety of rattle consisted of a number of dry gourds which were fastened round the waist of the dancer and rattled as he moved.

No specimens were seen in museum collections, nor in the field.

4. *Fipple*

Terms: *impempe*—a toy whistle . . . ; it produces a sound like that made by blowing into the barrel of a key (Kropf 1915).

Xhosa

A piece of calabash was used as a fipple in a whistle, *impempe*. According to Kirby (1934: 89, 90) this was in direct imitation of the fipple whistles regularly sold by traders. According to Plant (1931: 97) the fipple, made of a piece of calabash or the dry rind of a pumpkin, was shaped like a half moon and fixed in the reed.

Thembu

There is one specimen in the South African Museum collection: a Thembu whistle, *impempe*, closed at one end with a round of calabash. The short length of the mouthpiece consists of a half-circle of calabash (SAM-9583, Qebe Valley, Encobo, 1964).

PENIS-SHEATHS

Terms: *inxiba*—the penis-cap (Kropf 1915) (Mpondo, Lusikisiki, 1948); *iphaca*—penis-sheath (Hunter 1936: 101); *ichaga*—penis-sheath (Holt 1969: 194); *iqhagcu*—penis-sheath (EL Eth. 5296, Bomvana, Mtonyana, Hole-in-the-Wall, 1969).

General

The usual dress of a man was a cloak and a penis-sheath. No one, young or old, was supposed to leave the homestead unless the penis was covered. Amongst the materials used were small calabashes and Hamilton-Welsh (Louw 1964: 63) stated that they usually measured about 5 × 3,8 cm, but for use in fights larger ones approximately 5 × 6,4 cm were worn.

According to Hamilton-Welsh men and boys did not part with their calabash penis-sheaths unless they were sure of getting another one, because droughts and bad seasons could destroy a whole crop and gourds were thus difficult to obtain.

Xhosa

The small round calabashes used as penis-sheaths might be decorated with incised or painted patterns or covered with beads (Fritsch 1872: 58–59).

Specimens in the Hamilton-Welsh collection obtained in the Cala district (1930) and Queenstown (no date) respectively were decorated with chains and bells (HW 769, HW 771). The latter specimen was said to have been worn when taking part in a tribal fight.

Thembu

There is no reference in the literature to the Thembu use of penis-sheaths nor were museum specimens seen, but informants (African Explosives, 1955) stated that only boys wore small calabashes as penis-sheaths.

Bomvana

Calabash penis-sheaths, *amaqhaga*, were worn mainly by younger men. To prepare the sheath the gourd was allowed to dry out and the inside scooped out (Holt 1969: 194).

A number of specimens were seen in museums: EL 5355, 5360 (Elliotdale, 1969); EL 5296, 5297 (Mtonyana, Hole-in-the-Wall, 1969); and HW 766 (Elliotdale, 1927). One of them (EL 5297) had been decorated by scraping the skin of the gourd in stripes to give different colourings.

Mpondo

The Mpondo used to wear decorated calabash penis-sheaths (Backhouse 1844: 263) or plain round, calabash-like fruits of the *umkhangazi* tree (*Gardenia thunbergia* L.F.) or of the *umugube* tree (*Rothmannia globosa* Keay). By 1948 in the Lusikisiki district they were being worn only by old men (Shaw & Van Warmelo 1972 MS.). The informant had never heard of anyone making them for sale.

Mpondomise

No information was obtained concerning the use of penis-sheaths among the Mpondomise.

Mfengu

A calabash penis-sheath with a painted design and a chain and bell attached to its lower end is in the East London Museum. (EL 283, East London, 1928).

Bhaca

Hammond-Tooke (1958: 17) stated that among the Mount Frere Bhaca, especially the older generation, a penis-sheath was worn even under European-type trousers, for without it 'it is as if you are naked'. It was sometimes made from the hollow fruit of the *umthombothi* tree (*Spirostachys africanus* Sond.).

Hlubi, Xesibe

No information was obtained from any source.

RITUAL OBJECTS

Xhosa

The use of 'talking' calabashes among the Xhosa diviners was recorded by Smith (1824: 92) and by Ayliff (1832: 753–754). Water was poured in through a hole at the base of the calabash in which several other holes had been made and the calabash was then hung up in the house while the diviner danced. He then took the calabash in his hand, turned it over and called the names of the people present. When he said the name of the person who had 'bewitched' the patient it was claimed that the water would gush out. Neither author comments on the manner of hanging up the calabash so that water does not run out during the dancing.

De Jager & Gitywa (1963: 112–114) described the initiation of a diviner, the *umhlwayelelo* ceremony, in which the calabash formed part of the offerings to 'river people'.

The diviner prepared two dry calabashes with the help of the initiate. The calabashes were cut open at the neck with a knife and the contents emptied and kept, as these formed part of the offering to the 'river people' at a later stage in the ceremony. The initiate gathered a few strands of a sedge (*Cyperus textilis* Thunb.) from which handles and a carrying-net were made for the two calabashes, *amaselwa*. When this had been done the master diviner sent the initiate to fetch from the main hut the offerings, which consisted of two small strings of white beads, pumpkin and calabash seed (eight of each kind), sorghum grain (the white variety), 'three-pence worth of Xhosa tobacco' and a box of matches. These were all put into one of the calabash containers. The other calabash was filled with a sample of beer. During the ceremony at the riverside the contents of both the calabashes were offered; then the beer calabash was 'allowed to float half full in the water' and finally the other calabash was thrown into the river.

Mpondo

Hunter (1936: 46, 95) recorded that when a Mpondo hunting party set out, a girl, who had not yet reached puberty, sat at the kraal gate of each homestead from which men had gone out to hunt. She shook a calabash filled with lucky beans (Kirstenbosch: *Erythrina* spp.) kept for this purpose. Several other rites were also performed, all to ensure 'that the game might be soft', i.e. be easy to kill. Hunter stated further that it was customary among the Mpondo to empty milk out of all except the children's calabashes after the death of a member of the owner's own or related clan.

Thembu, Bomvana, Mpondomise, Mfengu, Hlubi, Bhaca, Xesibe

No information was recorded in the literature or in the field regarding the use of the calabash for ritual purposes among these tribes.

SNUFF-BOXES

Terms: *iqaqqa*—'any small box or case which is carried on the person; hence a snuff box . . .' (Kropf 1915); *idilelo*—calabash snuff-box (Mpondomise, Tshixo, Tsolo, 1969).

Snuff-taking was a favourite pastime among the Cape Nguni. Snuff-boxes were made from gourds or fruit-shells. Louw (1964: 28) mentioned that the earlier snuff-boxes were small gourds, but through droughts the seed of the small gourds became very rare and the larger type was used. These, however, were not easy to carry, especially when they were decorated with beads. The fruit of the *umhlala* tree (*Strychnos spinosa* Lam.) and the fruit of the Kaffir Klapper or Native Dog Rose (*Oncoba spinosa* Forsk.), known as the *umthongwane*, were used as containers for snuff.

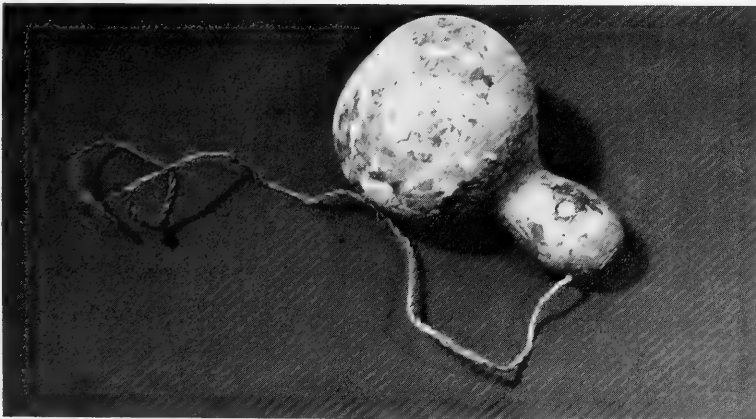
Xhosa

A number of writers mentioned that the calabashes used as snuff-boxes were small and decorated with beads (Moodie 1835: 260; Fleming 1856: 112; Lucas 1861: 6; Fritsch 1872: 68; Kropf 1889: 103). Kretzschmar (1853: 240) recorded them as being 2–3 'Zoll' (inches) in height and decorated with delicate carvings. Gourds of different sizes were used, however. Some were beaded or some were highly polished: HW 427 (Bashee 1950), HW 432 (King William's Town, 1880), HW 429 (Idutywa 1893) and HW 472 (Idutywa 1880). The two former belonged to chiefs and were kept for offering snuff to visitors.

Thembu

No information was found in the literature concerning the use of calabashes as snuff-boxes among the Thembu.

Several Thembu examples were seen in museums however: NASKO 35/838 (Gusi location, Elliotdale, 1935) (Fig. 18); SAM-4981 (Cala district, 1933) (see Fig. 5). Some are beaded (HW 437, Cofimvaba, 1934) and some plain and polished (HW 457, Umtata, 1916).



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Fig. 18. Thembu snuff-box, Gusi location, Elliotdale, 1935, NASKO 35/838.

Bomvana

No information was obtained in the literature, museum collections or in the field concerning the use of snuff-boxes among the Bomvana.

Mpondo

Kidd (1925: 55) referred to the use of gourds as containers for snuff among the Mpondo. A number of museum specimens were seen; in each case they were covered with beads: Kaffrarian Museum 441b (Mpondoland, no date); NASKO 61/12 (Umtata, 1960) (Fig. 19); HW 430 (Lusikisiki, 1897); HW 450 (Bizana, 1912); HW 462 (Flagstaff, 1920); HW 465 (Libode, 1913); Durban 777 (Transkei, 1913) (Fig. 20). One snuff-box in the Durban Museum (Transkei, no number, 1913) was, however, decorated with three branded black lines following the shape of the calabash from the top to the bottom.

Calabash snuff-boxes were seen still in use at Libode and Ngqeleni (1969).

Mpondomise

No references were found in the literature concerning the use of calabash snuff-boxes.

SAM-5624 (Tsolo, 1936) and SAM-5632 (Tsolo, 1936) (Fig. 21) are two snuff-boxes, the former covered with beads and the latter undecorated. In the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford, four flask-shaped gourds were seen, used for snuff containers. One was engraved and branded, one was covered with beads. The



Fig. 19. Mpondo snuff-box, Umtata, 1960, NASKO 61/12.

other two were globular and decorated with an engraved design (Pitt-Rivers, VII: 92, 1923). Informants at Tsolo (1969) stated that calabashes were still used for snuff-boxes.

Mfengu

No information was found in the literature concerning the use of calabash snuff-boxes but there are several museum specimens: HW 432 (King William's Town, 1880); HW 435 (Ciskei, 1910); HW 455 (Ciskei, 1889); HW 461 (Ciskei, 1910). All these specimens are covered with beadwork.

Bhaca

No information was obtained in the literature concerning the use of calabash snuff-boxes among the Bhaca.



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Fig. 20. Mpondo snuff-box, Transkei, 1913, Durban 777.



CM. 

Fig. 21. Mpondomise snuff-box, Tsolo, 1936, SAM-5632

One gourd, covered with beadwork, is in the Hamilton-Welsh collection (HW 438, Mount Ayliff, 1912).

At Entlabeni, Mount Frere (1969), informants stated that some people still used small calabashes as snuff-boxes.

Hlubi, Xesibe

No information was obtained from the literature, museum collections or in the field on the use of calabash snuff-boxes among these tribes.

SCOOPS, SPOONS AND LADLES

Terms: *iqoko (isiqoko)*— . . . calabash with a handle used for drinking Kaffir-beer (Kropf 1915); *indebe*—a calabash ladle (Kropf 1915); *inkezo*—calabash ladle (Hlubi, Sigoga, Matatiele district, 1961); *umcepe*—half a calabash, used as a ladle for drawing water or milk or taking out food, especially beer (Kropf 1915); *umcephe*—small calabash scoop for drinking water and beer, large one used for *amasi* (Hlubi and Xhosa, Sigoga, Matatiele district, 1961); *utiniko*—calabash scoop (Mpondo, UCT 32/38, Flagstaff, 1932).

Scoops, spoons and ladles are grouped under one heading because their use is similar. Both scoops and ladles were extensively used as household utensils for baling water, beer or milk into containers and were also used as spoons for eating and drinking. The Mpondomise (Tsolo, 1969) said that if one ate out of a scoop it showed that one was in a hurry.

Xhosa

The scoop itself was made from the body of the calabash, and the neck formed the handle (Ayliff 1855 MS.2; Shaw 1860: 369; Fritsch 1872: 73) (Fig. 22). A calabash spoon was used for eating corn (Kropf 1889: 101), to bale water or to take beer from a tin or served as an eating utensil for boys (EL Eth. 5461, Tshabo location, 1969; HW 2542, Umtata, 1917; and HW 2586, Zimbane, 1918). No field information was obtained concerning the use of these utensils.

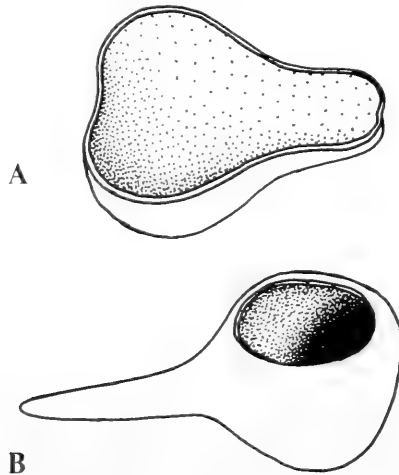


Fig. 22. A. Scoop. B. Ladle.

Thembu

Calabash ladles were used as drinking-vessels (Kidd, 1925: pls 30–31; Qebe Valley, Engcobo, 1969).

Bomvana

The Bomvana used '*umcepe*', a little ladle made by cutting a small calabash down the middle (Cook 1931: 57).

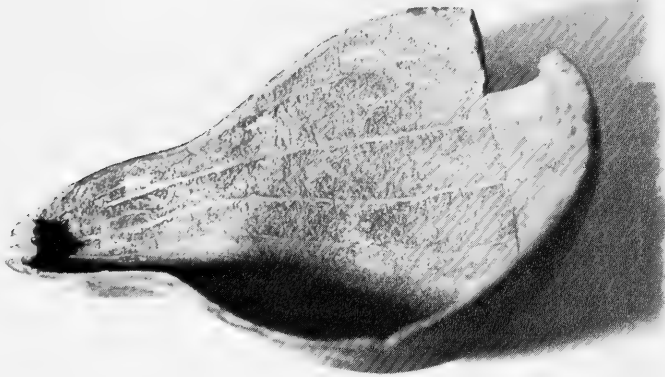
Initiates used calabash scoops when eating the *iinkobe* maize (Holt 1969: 104, 105). A scoop (EL 4900, Mtonjane, Hole-in-the-Wall, 1967), was made from a calabash cut in half lengthwise.

Mpondo

Calabash spoons and ladles formed part of the household utensils (Hunter 1936: pl. 8b; UCT 23/166, Pondoland (Fig. 23); UCT 32/38, Flagstaff, Pondoland (Fig. 24)). Informants (near Lwandile, Ngqeleni, 1939) used them for boiled mealies, water and beer. At Dikela Village, Libode (1969), they were used for water, beer and for small helpings of food taken when in a hurry.

Mpondomise

No information was found in the literature concerning the use of scoops, spoons and ladles, nor were any museum specimens seen. Mpondomise informants at Tshixo, Tsolo (1969), mentioned that for scoops, *umcephe*, the long-necked type of calabash was preferred.



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Fig. 23. Mpondo scoop, Pondoland, 1923, UCT 23/166.

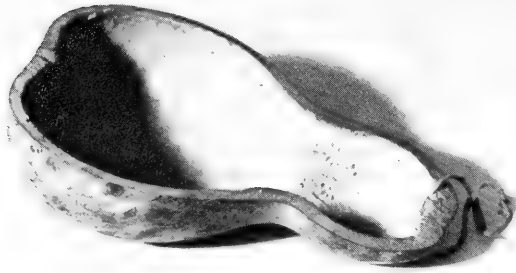


Fig. 24. Mpondo scoop, Holy Cross, Flagstaff, 1932, UCT 32/38.

Bhaca

No information on scoops, spoons or ladles was found in the literature nor were any museum specimens seen.

Bhaca informants at Mpoza, Mount Frere (1969), mentioned the use of calabash scoops for water.

Mfengu, Hlubi, Xesibe

No information was found either in the literature or museums concerning the use of scoops by these tribes. No information was found in the field regarding the Mfengu and Xesibe but at Sigoga, Matatiele district (1961), Hlubi informants confirmed the use of calabash ladles, *inkezo*, and scoops, *imicephe*.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. *Basin*

Thembu

The use of a calabash vessel as a basin was found among the Thembu, Engcobo, 1969. When a Thembu woman had given birth to a baby, she used a calabash basin to wash the baby and herself. This basin was destroyed when they came out of seclusion.

Bomvana

Similar information was recorded by Holt (1969: 79) among the Bomvana. According to his observations, the large calabash basin was mainly used to wash newly-born twins. The large calabash, *iselwa*, was filled with warm water. This calabash was, however, preserved even after the twins had grown up, as they would return from time to time to wash themselves ritually.

2. *Cupping instrument*

Xhosa

The instrument used for cupping was generally a horn (see Davison 1976). Two cases were recorded, however, where a calabash was used. Soga (1932: 178) described the method of cupping with a calabash, 'from two to three inches in diameter . . . the bottom being cut out, and part of the neck cut across, to which the mouth is applied for the purpose of suction'.

Informants, in 1955, confirmed the use of a calabash for cupping purposes (Shaw & Van Warmelo 1972 MS.).

3. *Lamp*

Xhosa

The use of a calabash lamp was mentioned by Whiteside (1906: 256)—a small lamp, 'consisting of a saucer or shallow calabash of melted fat with a wick or twisted rag'.

No further information was found in the literature, museums, or in the field, regarding the use of such lamps by other tribes.

4. *Ornaments*

Thembu

In the Qebe Valley, Engcobo (1969), small calabashes are grown. Some of them are beaded and used as ornaments.

Mpondomise

Calabashes are decorated for use as ornaments (Mjika, Tsolo, 1969).

5. *Water vessel for pipe*

Mpondo

An animal horn was usually used as the water vessel of dagga-pipes. However, the East London Museum has a calabash that was used for this purpose by Mpondo (EL 2042).

6. *Scrapers*

Mpondo

A Mpondo potmaker at Emamholweni, near Lwandile, Ngqeleni, 1969, confirmed the use of a hard piece of calabash rind as a scraper when making pots. The edge of the pot was also smoothed and shaped with the piece of calabash.

7. Traps

Mfengu

Monkey traps were also made from calabashes (Makalima (1945: chap. 9 para. 14)). Grain was placed inside the calabash, which was fastened to the ground. The hole in the top was only wide enough for the monkey to put in its outstretched paw to get at the grain. It was too small for the monkey to withdraw its clenched fist and it was thus caught.

SUMMARY

Certain gourds, indigenous to southern Africa, were planted by the southern Nguni in spring and harvested in autumn. They were mostly grown domestically, but not all soil was suitable for all sorts of gourds. The gourd was picked while still green and preparing the calabash for use entailed softening and scraping out the flesh of the fruit after the shell had been left to dry out.

There were four ways of decorating a calabash: by branding, engraving, covering with beads or, more recently, painting.

Repairing the calabash could be done by sewing together the edges of the crack with a twisted fibre cord and generally covering the mend with paste. Another way was to patch the hole with a piece of gourd, sewing the patch to the calabash. This was done with a two-ply fibre. Short-necked, pear-shaped calabashes were made into flasks for holding sour milk, water or beer. They were generally large flasks with holes in the tops which had pieces of maize-cob as stoppers. Sour milk formed an important part of the staple diet of the Cape Nguni peoples. Kidd stated that sweet milk was not as palatable to them as sour milk. Although Kay mentioned that milk which was kept in calabashes contracted a peculiar taste, Fox recorded that the milk which was kept in a calabash was preferred to that kept in a 'stone' jar. It took quite a time for a milk calabash to become 'seasoned', thereafter it could be used for years.

The smaller calabashes and fruit-shells were made into containers for fat and ochre used for cosmetic purposes, snuff-boxes, penis-sheaths and rattles. Medicine flasks made from gourds were relatively scarce but the small snuff-box type of calabash was used by diviners and herbalists as a medicine flask. Medium-sized calabashes were used as resonators for musical bows. Two records referred to calabashes being made into drums but this is no longer known. Plant mentioned the use made of the dry crust of a pumpkin or a piece of calabash shaped like a half moon as a pipple in a whistle.

Scoops, spoons and ladles were generally made from the long-necked type of gourd cut in half. The neck was used as a handle.

The calabash was primarily used as a container and utensil, but a few references mention its use for a trap, a lamp or a water-vessel for a pipe.

The calabash by virtue of its shape, durability and varying size and the ease with which it could be converted into a container or utensil was an extremely useful commodity to the Cape Nguni.

NATAL NGUNI

In the discussion on the cultivation, preparation, and repair of calabashes the different techniques have been taken as the primary dividing factor and not the areas defined in the introduction, but the field references of the different tribes are clearly stated.

CULTIVATION

Delagorgue (1847: 2: 240) and Fynn (1950: 306) recorded the cultivation of gourds among the Zulu and Fynn stated that they 'while young and tender form a principal part of their diet. When they become hard they are scooped out and used for beer, milk and water vessels.'

Zulu informants at Sanabe area, Nongoma (1970), said that when the calabash was growing a forked stick was often placed to hold it up so that it would grow straight.

Bomvu informants (Msinga area) at Tugela Ferry (1969) said seeds were planted in spring (i.e. October) and the gourds harvested in April or May. Similar information was obtained from Zulu informants at Jikaza area, Mahlabatini (1970), and at Stranger's Rest Trust Farm, Babanango Reserve (1971).

Ngwane in the Bergville area stated that if their own crop was not good, they bought the gourds from elsewhere and prepared them themselves.

PREPARATION

According to Bryant (1949: 316) and Fynn (1950: 306) the gourd was left to mature and after the dried internal pulp had been removed the 'smooth woody shell sometimes a foot in diameter provided the people with light and cool milk (*igula*) and water (*isiguba*) vessels'.

From information obtained in the field, four methods of preparing the calabash were found to be used:

1. A hole was cut or burnt in the top of the dried gourd. Boiling water and pebbles were poured into the gourd, which was then shaken and the inside emptied out (Bomvu, Tugela Ferry, 1969), or it was left to dry after cutting the hole and then only were the seeds and contents taken out (Zulu, Nongoma, 1970).

2. A widespread technique of preparing the calabash was by boiling the fruit, after the top had been cut off, to strengthen it. Ngwane informants at Mweni location, Bergville (1969), stated that the boiling lasted for approximately five hours, but according to Zulu informants at Nqutu (1969) the boiling time was 'a short while' only.

After the boiling, the calabash was removed from the water, stones put inside and the gourd swilled out (Zulu, Nqutu, 1969; Ngwane, Bergville, 1969).

Another variation was that, after boiling, the gourd was left until the inside rotted and came away from the sides. It was then emptied by shaking the contents out of the hole and further cleaned by swirling small stones inside (Zulu,

Stranger's Rest Trust Farm, Babanango Reserve, 1969); or the inside was scooped out when it had become soft after boiling, or the boiled gourd was left to get cold, and the inside was then removed with a stick (Ngwane, Bergville, 1969).

3. Another technique was to cut or burn a hole in the top. Then cold water was poured in and the inside was left to rot away. After a week the inside was scooped out or shaken with pebbles to loosen the flesh (Ngwane, Mnweni location, 1969; Zulu, Chief Molife's place, Nqutu, 1969; Zulu, Oviceni area, Melmoth, 1970).

4. Zulu informants at Kwa Mlamula, Tshongwe (1970), stated that the calabash was picked when whitish and left until nearly dry. Then a hole was cut in the top and a stick used to loosen the seeds inside. Sometimes hot water was added to help loosen the flesh.

The hole at the top was cut with a knife or burnt with a hot iron at a point vertical from the base, either before boiling (Bomvu, Tugela Ferry, 1969) or afterwards (Zulu, Nqutu, 1969; Khuze, Makhuzeni, Bulwer, 1969). For milk-flasks a hole was cut in the bottom and a piece of calabash shell was used as a stopper (Bomvu, Tugela Ferry, 1969; Zulu, Nqutu, 1969; Khuze, Makhuzeni, Bulwer, 1969).

The top hole may be closed with a stopper, *isivimbo*, made from an aloe, *ibudle*.

The preparation of calabash scoops was very much the same as the methods described above, except that when making a scoop or ladle the calabash was cut in half after cleaning it. A saw is used nowadays to cut it, as was recorded among the Ngwane, Upper Tugela, Bergville, 1969.

DECORATION

Natal Nguni tribes applied several techniques of decorating the calabashes: engraving, branding, covering the gourd with beadwork or with brass and copper wire (Isaacs (1935: 24), Mayr (1906: 468), Grossert (1968: 183)).

1. An example of the first type of decoration is SAM-3322 (Fig. 25). This is a small calabash possibly used as a snuff-box which was decorated with a design of houses, horses and carriages, men, soldiers and a wagon. The engraving appears to have been done with a sharp point before the gourd shell was dry. It was said to have belonged to Dingaan and to have been decorated by a craftsman who had been to Cape Town. This is obviously an individual specimen and no others like it were seen.

2. Field informants described the technique of decoration by branding with a hot iron, but no examples were seen (Zizi, Bergville, 1969; Zulu, Sanabe area, Nongoma, 1970).

3. Beadwork was frequently used for decorating snuff-boxes (DC 1201, Zululand, no date) (Fig. 26), and many museum specimens were seen. A beer-

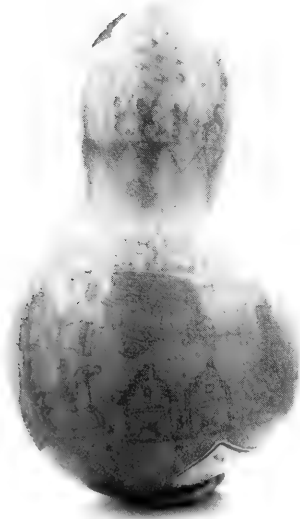


Fig. 25. Zulu snuff-box, said to have belonged to Dingaan, SAM-3322.

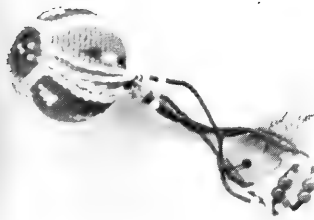
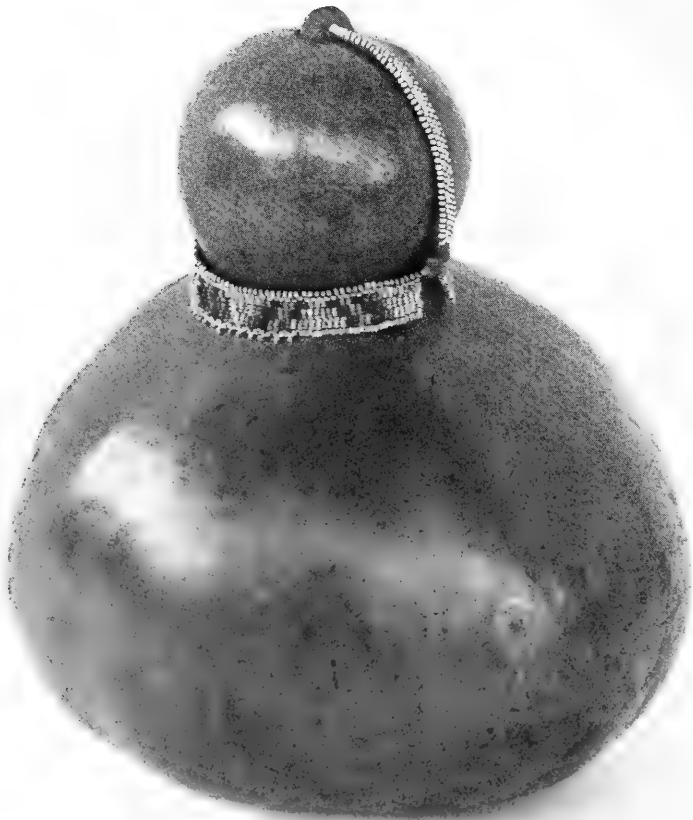


Fig. 26. Zulu snuff-box, Zululand, no date, DC 1201.



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Fig. 27. Zulu beer- or water-calabash, no locality, 1964, DC 1105.

or water-flask was seen decorated with a beadwork collar and a beadwork stopper (DC 1105, no locality, 1964) (Fig. 27).

Field information obtained from Zulu (Stranger's Rest Trust Farm, Babanango Reserve, 1971) was that water calabashes were generally ornamented with beads. According to information obtained from Zulu at Mbuzeni, Nqutu (1969), an *igula* or milk calabash was never decorated. No reason was given for this. Beer and water calabashes were, however, decorated. At Mbuzeni, Nqutu (1969), a beer calabash with a bead collar around the neck was seen (Fig. 28). Chief Bungane Miya (Zizi, Ebusingata, Bergville, 1969) stated that a gourd, be it

beaded or branded, could also be worn as an ornament on a belt or on a necklet —‘swanking in a Zulu way’. This may have applied to a snuff-box.

4. The fourth technique was to use wire-work, which was a popular method of decorating snuff-boxes and medicine flasks. Both ends of short lengths of wire, cut a bit longer than required on the outside, were pushed through the rind of the calabash at right angles. There is no record of how this was done, but because the wire fits tightly in the rind it is possible that it may have been heated or may have been put in when the calabash was still green (Fig. 29). A good example of this decoration using copper wire is a South African Museum specimen (SAM-7500, Natal, 1956) (Fig. 30). The calabash was highly polished with an intricate design of flowers on the lower bowl.

Further specimens were seen: on a snuff-box (SAM-8293, Natal, 1960) (Fig. 31), a snuff-box (SAM-8394, Eshowe, 1961) (Fig. 32), a container for holding scent (NM 709, no locality, 1906), a fat container (NM 1027, Zululand, 1909), and a snuff-box (NM 384, no locality or date) (Fig. 33).

REPAIR

Fynn (1950: 306) recorded that the calabashes were usually stitched with thread when they were broken. No actual mends have been seen.

At Mbuzeni, Nqutu (1969), a milk calabash was seen which had a hole in the base which had been stopped with cork. At Makhuzeni (Khuzi), Bulwer (1969) calabashes were smeared with mud, a precaution taken to prevent them from breaking easily.



Fig. 28. Zulu beer calabash, Mbuzeni, Nqutu, 1969.

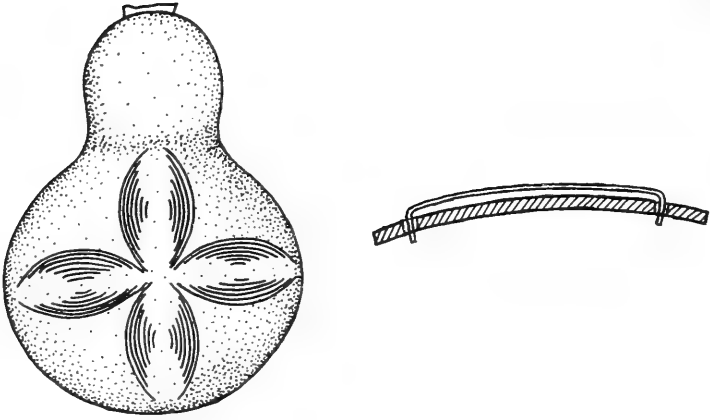
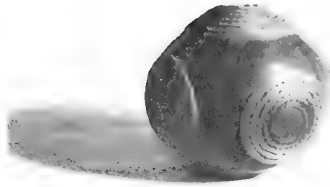


Fig. 29. Wire-work decoration.



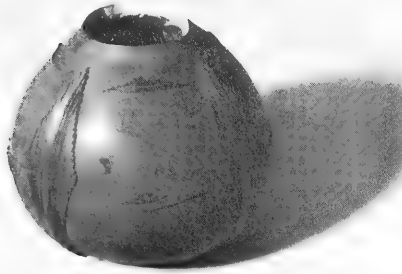
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Fig. 30. Zulu snuff-box, Natal, 1956, SAM-7500.



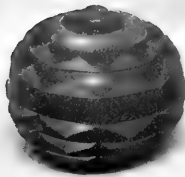
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Fig. 31. Zulu snuff-box, Natal, 1960, SAM-8293.



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Fig. 32. Zulu snuff-box, Eshowe, 1961, SAM-8394.



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Fig. 33. Zulu snuff-box, no locality, no date, NAS 384.

USES

MILK-FLASKS

Terms: *igula*—calabash milk vessel, usually used for sour milk (Doke & Vilakazi 1964); *igula*—prepared calabash, Bomvu, Ngulubeni, Tugela Ferry, 1969; '*ityalo*'—milk-flask (Aitchison 1917: 8); *umungé*—'an extra hole . . . at the bottom [of the calabash] (for draining off the whey . . .)' (Bryant 1949); *umungwe*—small hole at the bottom of a calabash to let out the whey (Doke & Vilakazi 1964); *isivimbo*—stopper, plug, cork (Doke & Vilakazi 1964).

Zululand

The use of the calabash as a container for sour milk was recorded in the literature by a number of writers (Grout 1862: 102; Tyler 1891: 43, 44; Mayr 1906: 465; Müller 1912–13: 858, fig. 7; Aitchison 1917: 8; Bryant 1949: 198; Fynn 1950: 108; Krige 1950: 55, 314; Bleek 1965: 38; Schlosser 1972: 267, 290). The calabash is described as having a 'hole, one or two inches across, at the top'. The milk calabashes have an additional hole at the bottom for drawing off the

whey. The whey could also be sucked out through a reed, instead of letting it run out by means of a hole at the bottom. Small calabashes, *isigúbú*, were also used, mainly to keep sour milk for babies.

According to Krige (1950: 314) a diviner going through initiation was not allowed to drink milk and therefore could not touch a calabash which had overflowed due to excessive fermentation.

No museum specimens were seen but many milk calabashes were seen in the field: Mbuzeni, Nqutu (1969); Jakaza area, Mahlabatini (1970); Oviceni area, Melmoth (1970); Stranger's Rest Trust Farm, Babanango Reserve (1971) (Fig. 34); Biyela, Nkandla district (1971).

Msinga area

No references were found in the literature and no museum specimens were seen but milk calabashes were seen in use among Bomvu at Ngulubeni, Tugela Ferry (1969).



Fig. 34. Milk calabash, Stranger's Rest Trust Farm, Babanango Reserve, 1971.

Drakensberg area

No references were found in the literature and no museum specimens were seen but milk calabashes were seen in use among the Ngwane at Upper Tugela, Bergville (1969).

Southern Natal

Müller (1912–13, pl. 7, 858) figured and described a calabash vessel for milk, presumably from the Marianhill area, and according to him termed, like water and beer calabashes, *igobongo*. It has a grass stopper attached to a ring of grass round the neck.

No museum specimens of milk calabashes from this area were seen, but Khuzi informants (Bulwer, 1969) confirmed their use.

WATER AND BEER FLASKS

Terms: *iqhaga*—calabash with the head cut off; large calabash for carrying beer (Doke & Vilakazi 1964); *iqaga*, *igobongo*, *isixapha*—wide-mouthed calabash for water, beer or milk, holding from 8 to 20 litres (Krige 1950); *isixhapha*—species of calabash (Doke & Vilakazi 1964); *igobongo*—wide-mouthed calabash for water or beer (Doke & Vilakazi 1964); *igobongo*—calabash holding 8–20 litres of water or beer (Müller 1912–13: 858); *igóbongo*—water and beer calabash ‘9 or 10 inches wide by a foot in height’ (Bryant 1949: 198); *igobongo*—large beer or water calabash (Zulu, Jikaza area, Mahlabatini, 1970); *ibanga*—beer calabash with broad mouth (Doke & Vilakazi 1964); *ibanqa*—large beer calabash, with broad mouth . . . (Krige 1950: 397); *uhengezi*—broad-mouthed calabash (Doke & Vilakazi 1964); *isihenge*—small broad-mouthed calabash, used for beer (Doke & Vilakazi 1964); *isigubu*—gourd or calabash emptied of its pulp and used as a water or beer vessel (Krige 1950: 397); *isigúbú*—small kind of calabash ‘mostly used by children when fetching water, or for serving drinking-water to the thirsty . . .’ (Bryant 1949: 198).

Zululand

Calabashes are much used for beer and water in Zulu households (Anonymous 1859: 44; Anonymous 1873: 20; Tyler 1891: 43; Mayr 1906: 465; Müller 1912–13: 854, 858; Kidd 1925: 326–327; Duggan-Cronin 1939, pl. 94; Bryant 1949: 198; Krige 1950: 190, 202, 397; Schlosser 1972: 83, 175). They are generally larger than the milk calabashes, but smaller kinds, *isigúbú*, were used by children when fetching water, or for serving drinking-water. A small basket, *imbenge*, is often used as a lid for a beer calabash. The *ibanga* is usually used for carrying beer. A carrying net often encloses it to facilitate transportation (NASKO 8332, no locality, no date) (Fig. 35). This specimen has a plaited grass handle and network. A beer- or water-calabash (DC 1105, no locality, 1964) is decorated with a beadwork collar (Fig. 27).

Krige (1950: 202) described the use of a calabash in the proceedings connected with harvesting. After reaping had been finished, people living near the royal homestead sent beer to the king ‘as a gesture of friendship and goodwill’. When conveying the gifts to the royal kraal, a young man, the leader of the procession, carried a calabash full of water, not beer, ‘to show that the beer they are carrying is clean food and that certain taboos have been observed’. Calabashes used as containers for beer and water were seen throughout Zululand during field

investigations (Mbuzeni, Nqutu, 1969; Sanabe area, Nongoma, 1970; Jikaza area, Mahlabatini, 1970; Babanango Reserve, 1971 (Fig. 36); Biyela, Nkandla district, 1971).

Msinga area, Drakensberg area

No information was obtained regarding the use of calabashes for water and beer in these areas.

Southern Natal

Müller (1912–13: 858) described and figured *igobongo*—large calabashes for beer or water.



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Fig. 35. Zulu beer calabash, no locality, no date, NASKO 8332.

COSMETIC AND OTHER SMALL FLASKS

Terms: *umfuma*—calabash of fat for anointing the body, or smearing skin petticoat (Doke & Vilakazi 1964).

Zululand

Shooter (1857: 140) recalled an incident when a girl gave a small calabash filled with grease to her 'favourite'.

Fat used in skin-dressing was kept in a calabash container (NM 1027, Zululand, 1909) (Fig. 37); (Biyela, Nkandla, 1971).

Msinga area, Drakensberg area

No information was obtained from any source regarding the use of calabashes as cosmetic or other flasks.

Southern Natal

Müller (1912–13: 858, pl. VII) figured and described small calabash flasks to hold sweet-smelling herbs and oil.

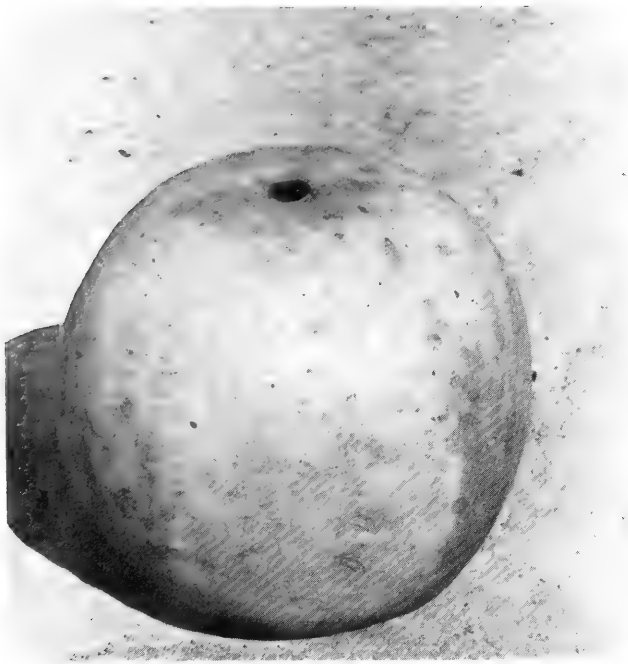


Fig. 36. Zulu water calabash, Babanango Reserve, 1971.

MEDICINE FLASKS

Terms: *isigubu*—medicine holder worn around the neck (Zulu, Babanango Reserve, 1971).

Zululand

A difference is made between medicine flasks and ritual objects because in the case of the former emphasis is on the use of the calabash as a container for medicines, whereas in the latter case the calabash objects form part of the ritual pattern.

Fynn (1950: 301) recorded the use of calabashes as medicine containers by women during pregnancy and childbirth. The pregnant woman was given a medicine known as *isihlambezo* which she always carried with her in a calabash and which she drank for the purpose of 'supporting' the child until it had gained strength.

Lugg (1929: 383) described the 'war-spear' of the Zulu. It was a little spear



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Fig. 37. Zulu calabash used to contain fat, Zululand, 1909, NM 1027.

decorated with beadwork, to which a number of small gourds, *uselwa*, were bound. These gourds contained strong medicines. Lugg interpreted the war spear to be a symbol of 'the martial or war spirit of the people, and were harm to come to it, the tribe would disintegrate'.

Calabashes were used during the ritual of 'doctoring' the crops to secure abundant harvests. Before planting began, the diviner summoned all the kraalheads to bring the seeds of the different crops they intended to plant. These (maize, pumpkins, etc.) were 'all put into a calabash, and into each headman's calabash the doctor puts a portion of the medicine [*isinkwa somkhando*'] about one inch in diameter. On reaching home, the kraalhead will divide up the *isinkwa* he received into smaller pieces and give some to each 'house'. No seed must be planted unless it has been in the calabash containing the medicine, and when the seed is being sown a little of the *isinkwa* must be put in the calabash holding the seed' (Krige 1950: 193–194).

No museum specimens were seen, but field information confirmed the use of calabashes as medicine containers (Zulu, Babanango Reserve, 1971).

Msinga area, Drakensberg area

No information was obtained from any source regarding the use of calabashes for medicine flasks.

Southern Natal

Khuzi informants at Makhuzeni, Bulwer (1969), stated that the smaller type of calabash was used to hold medicines.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

1. *Musical Bow*

Terms: *Type 1: ugubu*—'musical bow' with single string fitted with calabash resonator attached to the stave near its lower end, the string is struck by a stalk of 'tambootie' grass (Doke & Vilakazi 1964); *ugumbu*—musical bow with calabash resonator (Doke & Vilakazi 1964).

Type 2: inkokha—large-sized stringed musical instrument formed of a bow with calabash attached, similar to the *ugubu*, but having string tied down at the middle (Doke & Vilakazi 1964); *umakweyana*—smaller sized musical bow, 'maiden's instrument' (Kirby 1934: 206).

Zululand

Among the Zulu two types of musical bows are recorded in the literature (Gardiner 1836: 104; Angas 1849, pl. 25; Shooter 1857: 236, 238; Mayr 1908: 258; Kidd 1925, pl. 53; Kirby 1934: 196, 201, 205–206, 208–209; Duggan-Cronin 1939, pl. 112; Holden 1963: 271; Schlosser 1972: 71, 74, 391).

The first type was widespread and resembled the one used by the Cape Nguni (p. 18). A wooden bow was fitted with a string of twisted sinew which was secured in a V-notch at both ends of the bow. It was struck with a thin stick, reed or grass, according to Kirby (1934: 201) usually 'tamboukie grass (*Andropogon marginatus* Stend.)'. A calabash was fixed permanently to the lower end of the bow as a resonator.

According to Kirby (1934: 201) there was no specialization in the making of the *ugubu*, although men usually made the instruments for the women, who played them. Kirby furthermore mentioned that 'the *ugubu* is usually kept under the framing of the hut, in which a fire frequently burns. As a result, the bow and the calabash gradually turn a rich dark brown colour, which, with continual polishing with fat, renders old instruments very attractive.'

The second type of musical bow, *umakweyana*, had the string tied back to the wooden bow at a point near which the calabash resonator was attached and this gave two chords. Mayr (1908: 258) termed it *uqwabe*. According to Kirby (1934: 209) this type was of more recent origin than the *ugubu*. 'Its relatively recent introduction, together with the use of the name *unkoka*, may suggest that the instrument was borrowed from northern tribes.' Musical bows were not made by specialists though it was usually the men who made them and the women who played them. According to Kirby (1934: 208) among the Zulu the second type was played by both men and women, 'the larger sizes by men, single or married, and the smaller by maidens or newly-married women'.

No museum specimens were seen but two examples of the second type *umakweyana*, seen in the field, confirm its present-day use. A reed was used to strike the string (Zulu, Nongoma, 1970 and 1971) (Fig. 38).

Msinga area, Drakensberg area

No information was obtained from any source regarding the use of calabashes as resonators on musical bows.

Southern Natal

Smith (1955: 90–91) described the one-chord musical bow, with a calabash resonator, seen in southern Natal.

No museum specimen was seen nor any information obtained in the field.

2. *Drum*

Terms: *isigupu*—a drum (Aitchison 1917: 29).

Zululand, Msinga area, Drakensberg area, southern Natal

Except for the inference from the above, no information was obtained from any source regarding the use of calabashes as drums in these areas specifically, but there is the following general description for the Natal Nguni: 'A piece of brayed goat skin is stretched over the hollow ends of a large gourd previously prepared by being scooped out and dried. The goat skin is attached to each end of the calabash by means of leather thongs' (Aitchison 1917: 29). Neither Kirby (1934: 22–28) nor any other author confirms the use of a scooped-out gourd as a drum. All Kirby's examples refer to hollowed out wood.

3. *Rattle*

Terms: *iselwa*—hand-rattle (Doke & Vilakazi 1964).

Zululand

The hand-rattle is a calabash, perforated with tiny holes, containing a few stones, and mounted upon a stick. Kirby (1934: 9) thought it was borrowed by the Zulu from the Tsonga, as according to him this was not a widespread Zulu instrument.

No examples were seen in museums or in the field.



Fig. 38. Woman playing musical bow—*umakweyana*, Zulu, Nongoma, 1970.

Msinga area, Drakensberg area, southern Natal

No information was obtained from any source regarding the use of calabashes as rattles.

PENIS-SHEATHS

Terms: *umncwado*—prepuce cover (Doke & Vilakazi 1964); *umncedo*—prepuce cover (Doke & Vilakazi 1964); *incwedu*—penis-sheath (Campbell 1888: 301); *isingaqunqafu*—penis-cover (Doke & Vilakazi 1964). (The words listed above are terms used for penis-sheaths but the dictionary (Doke & Vilakazi 1964) does not specify from what they are made and the terms must thus be taken as general.)

Zululand

Campbell (1888: 301) described a penis-sheath which was made from a hollowed out 'young calabash'.

Southern Natal

A penis-sheath (BM 59-9-8-50) (Fig. 39), in the British Museum, decorated with a strip pendant, was obtained at Port Natal in 1859. No examples of calabash penis-sheaths were seen in the field.

Msinga area, Drakensberg area, southern Natal

No information was obtained from any source regarding the use of calabashes as penis-sheaths.

RITUAL OBJECTS

Calabash containers used in rituals differ from the medicine containers as

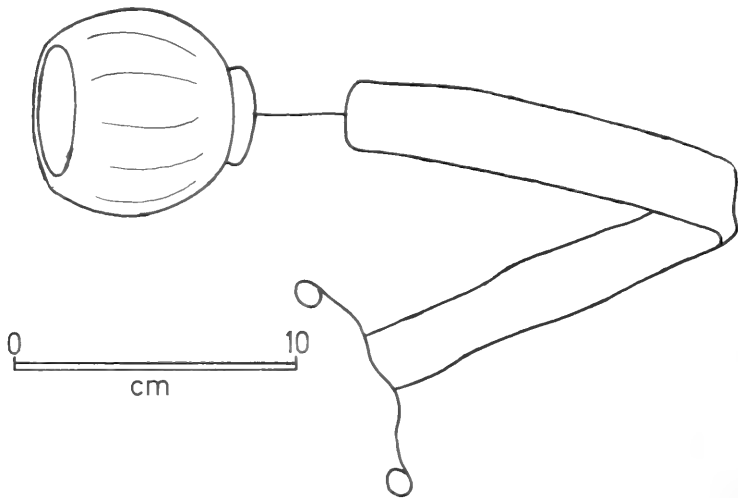


Fig. 39. Zulu penis-sheath, Port Natal, 1859. BM—59-9-8-50.

the objects form part of a ceremony in which supernatural powers are manipulated.

Zululand

Several ritual uses of calabashes have been recorded among the Zulu:

1. Before an army set out to war, 'the doctor brings out the chief's calabash which contains special medicines. These are then churned up. If the mixture froths over it is a sign that one side will be victorious; if it does not froth over it shows that the other side will be victorious. Or else there may be two calabashes selected which represent the two sides. Whichever calabash froths over first decides which army will be victorious' (Kidd 1925: 307).

2. Isaacs (1936: 242) described the First Fruits Ceremony conducted by the Zulu king. He stood at the head of the kraal and ran forward and backward three times towards the warriors. Each time he threw a calabash, thereby indicating to the people to start gathering the new harvest. The person nearest to whom the calabash fell thought himself greatly honoured.

3. Tyler (1891: 113) recorded the use of a 'talking calabash' amongst the Zulu. A diviner poured water into a calabash perforated with small holes and by observing the direction in which the water spouted he divined the direction from where the patient's disease had come.

4. Another sort of divining was noted by Schlosser (1972: 242–243). The diviner described the 'calabash of the spirits', *isigubhu somoya* or *umvumangoma*, as a hollowed-out gourd, to which a stick covered with leopard skin was attached. This the diviner used for divination, which Schlosser defined as 'to hypnotise, to control something by way of magic'. Out of the calabash the diviner heard the voices of the ancestral spirits. Furthermore Schlosser (1972: 114–115) stated that a 'divining calabash' filled with snuff was a method by which the diviner could contact the ancestral spirits, instead of vice versa. The diviner, *inyanga*, mentioned the name of the spirit before taking the snuff. He would then become delirious and in this state contact could be made with the ancestral spirit concerned.

5. The Zulu believed that an effective way of getting rid of a troublesome dream was to make a mixture of a cut-up green calabash, the ground powder of the *omluthi* plant (*umluthu* is *Vitex rehmannii* Guerke (Watt & Breyer-Brandwijk 1962: 1434)) 'and certain medicines which the patient has used as an emetic, and put this in a calabash with a lid'. Then the patient took the calabash some way along the road and dashed it to pieces and left it without looking back. Others dug a hole in the path and poured the contents of the calabash into it. The patient would be well and some passers-by would contract the dream. (Krige 1950: 287.)

No museum specimen was seen nor was any information obtained in the field.

Msinga area, southern Natal and Drakensberg area

No information was obtained from any source regarding the use of calabashes for ritual objects.

SNUFF-BOXES

Terms: *ishungu*—snuff-box (originally made from the shell of the *ithongwane* fruit) (Doke & Vilakazi 1964); *iyezane*—fruit of the *Oncoba spinosa* Forsk. tree, the hard shells of which are used for snuff-boxes (Doke & Vilakazi 1964); *indhlingo*—large calabash snuff-box (Plant 1905: 35); *idhlelo*—snuff-box (Mayr 1906: 468; Müller 1912–13: 858).

Zululand

Many authors described the use of a snuff-box made from a gourd or from the fruit of *Oncoba spinosa* Forsk. (Fritsch 1879: 287; Kidd 1925: 286; Plant 1905: 35; Mayr 1906: 468; Müller 1912–13: 858). It was said to be an 'indispensable article' to the Zulu (Shooter 1857: 8; Little 1887: 169). It is recorded that the king had a snuff-box bearer who handed his beaded calabash snuff-box to him in a basket (Angas 1849: 29).

Of the snuff-boxes seen in museum collections, some were plain calabashes or fruit-shells, others were covered with beadwork (SAM-8290, Zululand, 1960; Durban 3809, Mpofana, 1933; DC 1201, Zululand, no date); some were decorated with intricate designs of brass and copper wire (SAM-8394, Eshowe, 1961; PEM 1450/98, Zululand, no date) and one had a design engraved on the shell (SAM-3322, Zululand, no date) (Fig. 25). Stoppers were made of calabash shell, fruit-shell or wood.

At Nkandle (1971) informants stated that snuff-boxes, *amashungu*, had formerly been made from the fruit-shells of the *umthongwane* tree (*Oncoba spinosa* Forsk.) (Doke & Vilakazi 1964) and a woman was seen wearing one round her neck at Stranger's Rest Trust Farm, Babanango (1971).

Msinga area

No information was obtained from the literature nor were any museum specimens seen.

In the field the use of gourd snuff-boxes was confirmed by Bomvu informants at Ngulubeni, Tugela Ferry (1969), who described them as being small calabashes with a double bowl or flask-shaped.

Drakensberg area

No information was obtained in the literature, in museums or in the field concerning the use of calabash snuff-boxes in this area.

Southern Natal

Müller (1912–13, pl. 3) figured snuff-boxes from this area and museum specimens were seen (Fig. 40).

SPOONS, SCOOPS AND LADLES

Terms: *isicakulo*—ladle (used to be made of wood, calabash, or burnt clay) (Doke & Vilakazi 1964); *inkezo*—ladle (cut from gourd) (Doke & Vilakazi 1964); *ukhezo*—spoon (of any kind, whether carved of wood, formed of a split gourd, or of metal) (Doke & Vilakazi 1964); *ukhezo*—calabash scoop (Khuzi, Bulwer, 1969); *indebe*—half of split gourd, used for baling water, beer etc. (Mayr 1906: 465); *isigwembe*—a calabash cut in half lengthwise and used as a drinking cup (Zizi, Bergville, 1969).

Scoops, spoons and ladles are grouped together because of their similar form and function.

Generally the long-necked type of calabash is used for both ladles and scoops and the neck forms the handle. At Bergville, Zizi informants (1969) stated that the flask-shaped type was cut in half lengthwise and was then also used as a ladle.

Although generally calabash household utensils are prepared by women, information obtained from Khuzi informants at Makhuzeni, Bulwer (1969), was that men were responsible for the making of calabash scoops and ladles. This, however, does not imply any strict specialization.



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Fig. 40. Zulu snuff-box, Zwartkop, Pietermaritzburg, 1939, NASKO 8044.

Zululand

Grout (1862: 102) and Tyler (1891: 121) recorded the use of a small gourd as a drinking cup, 'a dipper made from the shell of a gourd . . .'. Mayr (1906: 465) recorded that half of a split gourd was used for baling water and beer.

Specimens seen in museums and in the field can be divided into two types: the first is made from the long-necked calabash and is generally classified as being a ladle (UCT 38/14, no locality (Fig. 41); Babanango Reserve, 1971 (Fig. 42)); the second type described as being a scoop is an elongated fruit-shell cut in half lengthwise (Mbuzeni, Nqutu, 1969; Sanabe area, Nongoma, 1970).

The main point of difference between the two types was that the former had a bowl which could hold liquid whereas the latter was intended for dry measures and for skimming or dishing up.



Fig. 41. Zulu ladle, no locality, 1938, UCT 38/14.



Fig. 42. Zulu ladle, Babanango Reserve, 1971.

Msinga area

No references were found in the literature, no museum specimens were seen and no information was obtained in the field.

Drakensberg area

No information was obtained in the literature nor were museum specimens seen, but Zizi informants at Bergville (1969) stated that calabash scoops, *amakhezo*, were used. The hole was cut before the gourd was boiled. The exact position of the hole was not stated. Ngwane informants at Upper Tugela, Bergville (1969), used calabash scoops. A hole was cut in the bowl with a knife. A calabash cut in half lengthwise with a saw was used as a ladle, *isigwembe*, for dishing up.

Southern Natal

Müller (1912–13: 858) figured *indebe*, large scoops used in the preparation of beer. Museum specimens of each of the varieties described above were seen (SAM-8441, Natal, 1961 (Fig. 43); NASKO 8297, Pietermaritzburg, 1939 (Fig. 44); NASKO 8037, Pietermaritzburg, 1939 (Fig. 45)).

Khushi informants at Makhuzeni, Bulwer (1969), confirmed the use of calabash scoops but no examples were seen.

MISCELLANEOUS

Chamber pot

Terms: *isibekedu*—chamber (earthenware or calabash) used as night commode by women and old men [cf. *isikigi*] (Doke & Vilakazi 1964).

Zululand

According to Bryant (1949: 203) the use of chamber pots was a custom which the Zulu had probably taken over from the Europeans. 'These vessels



Fig. 43. Zulu ladle, Natal, 1961, SAM-8441.

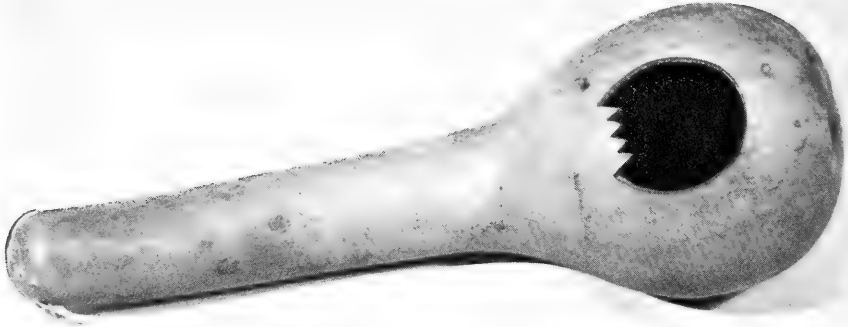


Fig. 44. Zulu ladle, Pietermaritzburg, 1939, NASKO 8297.

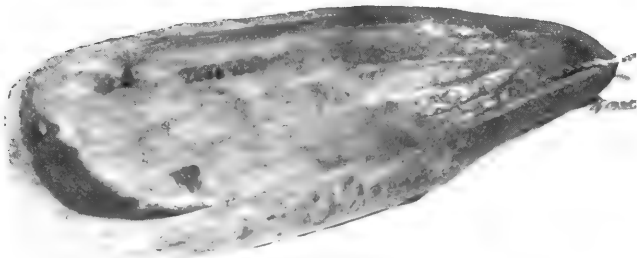


Fig. 45. Zulu scoop, Pietermaritzburg, 1939, NASKO 8037.

were sometimes specially manufactured, but as a rule any old pot furnished a suitable "chamber" for the lady of the house, who referred to it euphemistically as her "daughter" (*iNtombazana*). The husband, however, always preferred a small calabash or gourd-shell, with an appropriate aperture at the top, to any of these earthenware vessels; and he lovingly called it his "son" (*umFana*).

Msinga, Drakensberg, southern Natal

No museum specimens were seen nor was any information obtained in the

field, in Zululand, the Msinga area, southern Natal nor among the Amangwane and Zizi of the Drakensberg.

2. *Comb*

Natal (general)

According to Grossert (1968: 193) combs were made from gourd rind and, like other calabash utensils, they were decorated or engraved with designs. No further information was obtained from the literature, museums or field.

3. *Fertility doll*

Zululand

Delegorgue (1847: 326) described a fertility doll seen among the Zulu, made from gourd and filled with iron ore. The doll represented a child. The diviner instructed the woman to carry and fondle the doll as if it were her own child. Fertility was believed to be secured this way. Although fertility dolls made of other materials are known, no museum specimens of calabash dolls were seen nor was any information obtained in the field.

Msinga area, southern Natal, Drakensberg area

No information was obtained from any source regarding the use of calabashes for making fertility dolls.

4. *Lamp*

Zululand

Gardiner (1836: 36) recorded the use of a lamp consisting of a calabash filled with fat and having a rag wick.

No museum specimens were seen nor was any information obtained in the field.

Msinga area, Drakensberg area, southern Natal

No information was obtained from any source regarding the use of a calabash as a lamp.

5. *Ornaments*

Drakensberg area

According to the Zizi (Bergville, 1969) beaded calabashes might be attached as ornaments to a belt or a necklet 'swanking in the Zulu way'.

SUMMARY

The cultivation of gourds among the Natal Nguni does not differ from the method used among the Cape Nguni. They are planted in spring and harvested in April or May. Four methods of preparing the gourd were recorded in the field;

either by boiling the fruit or by using boiling water to swill out the inside or by scooping it out or by letting it rot away after previously adding cold or boiling water. The aim was to clean the gourd from the inside and to strengthen the shell. No evidence was found of any sort of specialization in the preparation of gourds, but usually it was a woman's occupation except at Makhuzeni, Bulwer (1969), where it was stated that men were mainly responsible for the making of calabash scoops and ladles.

Calabashes were decorated either with beadwork, brass, copper, and iron wirework, or by engraving or branding.

No detailed information was obtained concerning the repair of calabashes. The only reference found in the literature was by Fynn, who stated that broken gourds were usually stitched with thread, but gave no details of the method.

Among the Natal Nguni gourds were mainly used for household and personal utensils, and mostly as containers.

The same type of calabash was used for milk, water and beer but the milk calabash usually had a hole and stopper in the base to draw off the whey.

Fat used in skin-dressing was kept in a calabash.

Very little information was obtained on the use of calabash flasks for cosmetics and medicine, and that mainly from the literature.

Both types of musical bow used among the Natal Nguni, that is the *ugubhu*, having one chord, and the *inkokha*, having the string tied back in one place to make two chords, have calabashes attached as resonators.

The use of a calabash both as a drum and as a rattle were mentioned only in the literature.

Campbell described a penis-sheath made from a hollowed-out 'young calabash' but no information was obtained in the field.

The use of calabashes in rituals is well recorded in the literature, but no field information was obtained. Calabashes used as medicine containers have been discussed separately from calabashes used in rituals as the latter formed part of a rite in which supernatural powers were manipulated whereas the former were used only as containers.

According to information from the literature as well as museum specimens, calabash snuff-boxes appear to have been in common use, but this depended on the availability of gourds. Fruit-shells were often used instead. A characteristic of snuff-boxes was that they were very often decorated, either with beads, or wirework or with engraved designs.

The long-necked type of gourd, termed to be either a spoon or a ladle, was used for liquids.

A scoop, made from an elongated gourd cut in half lengthwise, was mainly used for dry measures and for skimming or dishing-up.

A comb made of gourd rind was recorded by one author. Another author recorded the use of a whole gourd to make a fertility doll.

Thus, comparatively speaking, the use of calabashes did not differ from that of the Cape Nguni. The form and texture of the gourd was well suited to the

needs of the people, although its availability depended on the good seasonal rains.

Informants in one area stated that if their own crop failed they would try to buy the unprepared gourds from elsewhere.

SWAZI

CULTIVATION

No information was obtained about Swazi cultivation of gourds.

PREPARATION

There is no information in the literature concerning the method of preparation of calabash utensils among the Swazi. According to informants at Magugu, Ingwavuma (1970), the gourds were left to ripen on the vine, they were then picked and a hole was bored in the top of the fruit. Cold water was poured into the gourd to loosen the seeds. The water was left in for some time to allow the flesh to rot. The gourd was then shaken and the flesh was scooped out. The hole was closed with a wooden peg, and the vessel was then ready.

Swazi in the Barberton district used a slightly different method. After the hole had been made the gourd was boiled for an indefinite time and while it was boiling a stick or wire with a hook at the end was used to loosen the pulp. When it was loose the gourd was removed from the water, emptied out and cleaned with pebbles, sand and water and finally washed thoroughly (G. Velcich, personal communication 1974).

DECORATION

In the Barberton area, if it is desired to decorate the calabash, the outer skin is scraped off before the fruit is boiled. Branded decoration was done at the end of the process. For colour, pounded leaves of the *mganu* (*Sclerocarya caffra* Sond.), *nkuhlu* (*Trichilia emetica* Vahl.) (Watt & Breyer-Brandwijk 1962: 1448, 1451) and red sorghum were added to the water to give the calabash a reddish colour (G. Velcich, personal communication, 1974).

No further information was found from any source concerning the decoration of calabashes.

REPAIR

No information was obtained.

USES

MILK-FLASKS

Terms: *legula* or *legula lemasi*—milk-flask (Myburgh 1949: 42); *igulo*—milk-flask (Magugu area, Ingwavuma, 1970).

No information was obtained from the literature, other than Myburgh's note of the term. A large calabash milk-flask in the SAM collection (SAM-8699,



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Fig. 46. Swazi milk calabash, Mbabane, 1962, SAM-8699.

Mbabane, 1962 (Fig. 46)) is covered with grass network with a loop for carrying. Informants at Enqabene Mission, Mankaiana (1962), and in the Magugu area, Ingwavuma (1970), used calabashes for sour milk, *amasi*. The hole in the bottom of the calabash was closed with a wad of the outside leaves of a bulb.

WATER AND BEER FLASKS

Terms: *liqhaga*—beer calabash (Myburgh 1949: 55); *ibanga*—calabash for holding water (Magugu area, Ingwavuma, 1970).

No information was obtained in the literature other than Myburgh's note of the term, nor were specimens seen in museums, but water and beer calabashes were seen in use at Enqabene Mission (1962), and in the Magugu area, Ingwavuma (1970).

COSMETIC AND MEDICINE FLASKS

Medicine flasks which form part of rituals have been classed as ritual objects. No information was obtained regarding the use of calabashes as ordinary medicine flasks or containers for cosmetics.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

1. *Musical bow*

Terms: *Type 1: ligubu*—musical bow (Kirby 1934: 197).

Type 2: umakweyana—musical bow with the string tied back to the stave (Kirby 1934: 205).

The two types of musical bows used among the Swazi are the same as those of the Natal Nguni. According to Kirby (1934: 201), the second type of musical bow was unknown to the Cape Nguni, and was apparently adopted by the Zulu and Swazi only in recent times.

Type 1 is the 'classic' stringed instrument of the Swazi, *ligubu*, where the bow-string is generally secured by means of a peg at the lower end and a V-notch at the upper end. The calabash resonator is fastened to the bow by means of a loop or knot. On one example seen (NASKO 6270, no locality, 1921) there is a cloth pad between the bow and the calabash.

Type 2, the *umakweyana*, is similarly constructed, the only difference being that the string is tied back to the stave to give two chords (Marwick 1966: 82).

An *umakweyana* was seen in Pigg's Peak (SAM-10065, 1971, Fig. 47). The string which is tied back to the stave also held the calabash resonator in position. The string was struck with a reed.

PENIS-SHEATHS

Terms: *umncatfo*—penis-sheath (Marwick 1966: 85).

Marwick wrote that 'just before the age of puberty is reached a boy is given a penis covering *umncatfo* made of a small kind of calabash . . . or of the small shell of a fruit called *umthongwane*'; (snuff-box tree: *umthongwane*, *Oncoba spinosa* Forsk. (Doke & Vilakazi 1964).

No information was found in museum collections or in the field.

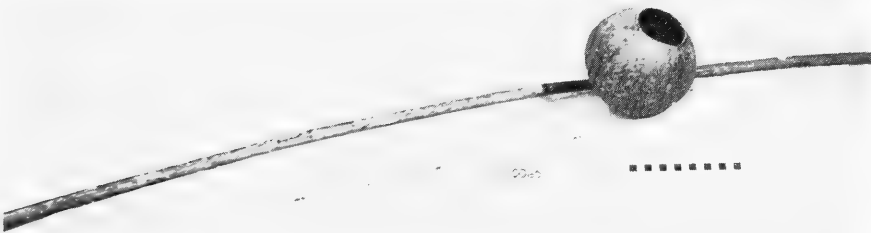


Fig. 47. Swazi musical bow (*umakweyana*) Pigg's Peak, 1971, SAM-10065.

RITUAL OBJECTS

Terms: *luselwa*—gourd which has ritual significance (Marwick 1966: 182); *umango*—sacred calabash (Schoeman 1935: 172).

The use of calabashes in rituals is frequently recorded in ethnographic studies of the Swazi but no museum specimens were seen nor was any evidence obtained in the field.

1. The calabash played an important part in the preliminary rites of the First Fruits Ceremony, *Incwala*, which the Swazi performed before the harvest.

The rites began with a pilgrimage to the sea. The doctor, *vanyana*, in charge of the rites, and several other men proceeded to the royal kraal to fetch a special calabash, called *inkosatana*, which was used to carry the sea water back to the homestead of the *vanyana*. A black beast was killed and from its hide was made a pad for the bottom of the calabash and strips to attach the pad and run vertically up to the neck. This was to carry and to protect it. The gall-bladder, *inyongo*, of the beast was squeezed over the calabash, thereby securing good luck for the venture. They, '*Vanyana* and a couple of men', returned to his home and waited till the time arrived to set out for the sea. The journey down to the sea took place during December at a time when the return would coincide with the new moon (Marwick 1966: 182–191). At the sea, the group proceeded to the shore before sunrise and according to Cook (1930: 206) 'all naked, they sing the "Inqwala" song and fill the calabash'. When reaching the various homesteads on their return journey the party shouted out the praise names of the chief. Cook (1930: 206) stated that this was an 'intimation to the head of the kraal to kill a beast—it is not a sacrifice'. The gall-bladder of the beast and its tail were then attached to the calabash. This was repeated at every homestead the group happened to pass. At the royal kraal the calabash was delivered and the *incwala* could then commence. (The sea water was used in the preparation of medicines and not in the rites that followed.) In the concluding rites of the *incwala* a gourd, *luselwa*, was eaten by the king. Cook (1930: 209) stated that 'during the *cunga* ceremony the Paramount Chief eats a pumpkin (*luselwa*) which has been specially prepared for him'. The remains of this, and another gourd collected the previous year, were thrown to the regiment waiting outside. The latter was caught and returned to the doctors. This was an indication that the fruits of the new season might be eaten.

The man who caught it proceeded to a doctor as quickly as possible in order to obtain medicines to fortify himself against the potent ones with which the *luselwa* had been doctored. (Marwick 1966: 190.)

The rites were concluded by a fire where the remains of the *luselwa*, as well as several other objects used during the *incwala* ceremonies, were burnt. With this the new year was 'opened' (Cook 1930: 210).

Kuper (1943–4: 232; 1947: 42, 219) gave slightly different descriptions of the *incwala* ceremonies but the relevant point was that the calabashes used for the ceremony were considered sacred vessels.

2. Schoeman (1935: 172) described the rain ceremony among the Swazi. This was mainly performed in times of drought. A small girl accompanied the *induna* of the king to a secret cave in the Mantenga Mountains. On their arrival, the girl took the *umango* or the sacred calabash (Schoeman stated that the *umango* was always kept in a dry place, such as the above-mentioned cave), removed its grass covering and started to churn, *pehla*, the mixture in the calabash with a special churn stick, *ludjudju*, till 'the foam flows over the rim of the pot. They believe that the white foam, flowing over, will call the rain clouds into the heavens.'

SNUFF-BOXES

Terms: *ihlelo*—snuff-box (Magugu area, Ingwavuma, 1970).

The use of gourd snuff-boxes was confirmed by informants from the Magugu area, Ingwavuma (1970). It was also stated that the fruit-shells of the *ithongwane* tree (Snuff-box tree: *Oncoba spinosa* Forsk. (Doke & Vilakazi 1964)) were used as snuff-containers. A hole was bored in the top and a small stick was used to poke out the seeds.

SPOONS, SCOOPS AND LADLES

Terms: *siphungu*—calabash spoon for drinking beer (Myburgh 1956: 124); *luselwa*—calabash scoop (Myburgh 1956: 124); *ndzeko*—calabash dipper used for drinking water or marula beer (Myburgh 1949: 131, 132).

The only information found in the literature was Myburgh's brief list of terms.

No specimens were seen in museum collections or in the field.

SUMMARY

The method used among the Swazi for the preparation of gourds does not differ basically from the techniques used among the Cape and Natal Nguni. From field information obtained, cold water was used to clean out the gourd by leaving it in for some time to allow the flesh to rot. The gourd was then shaken and the flesh scooped out.

No information was obtained about the technique of decoration and repair of calabashes.

Among the Swazi, gourds were used for household and personal utensils, e.g. milk-, water- and beer-flasks and snuff-boxes. No information was obtained, however, concerning the use of calabashes as penis-sheaths, cosmetic or medicine containers. Calabashes were used as resonators in the two types of musical bow.

The literature contains several descriptions of the use of calabashes in the rituals of the *incwala* ceremony of the First Fruits, and in the rain-making ceremony. The fact that *luselwa lwembo*—'the wild gourd from Embo'—was used in the *incwala* ceremony on which the welfare of the people depended, may account for the importance of gourds in other ceremonies.

SOUTHERN TRANSVAAL NDEBELE

CULTIVATION

No information about the method of cultivation or preparation of calabashes was found in the literature. In fact, Weiss (1963: 21), when discussing artistic expression among the Ndzundza, maintained that the gourd was not originally familiar to them, and had been introduced only recently. There is no confirmation of this.

In the field, however, information was obtained from two groups of Ndzundza about the growing and preparation of gourds. Informants at Chief Mapoch's homestead, Weltevreden, Groblersdal (1972), and at Chief Mahlangu's homestead, Goedgedacht, Nebo (1973), stated that gourds were planted in November and December and gathered in June and July. The fruit grew on the ground and was covered with grass to protect it from frost.

PREPARATION

Method 1. In the preparation of calabashes the first step was to cut off the top of the gourd and take out some of the seeds to be kept for future sowing. The gourds were boiled until the inside was soft, when it was scraped and scooped out with a stick or a stirrer. The thin, green outer skin was then removed. The calabash was then left to dry for three or four days (Chief Mapoch's homestead, Weltevreden, Groblersdal, 1972).

Method 2. At Goedgedacht, Nebo (1972), another method was also used. Water was poured into the gourd and the flesh was left to rot for a few days. The flesh was then shaken out and stones were added to precipitate the cleaning-out process. The gourd was then boiled in a clay pot in order to strengthen the shell. The outer skin was taken off by means of a scraper, a knife or a piece of corrugated iron. Mealie seeds were used to clean the inside of the open type of calabash dish—*ikapho*—which was used for water.

DECORATION

The most common way of decorating the calabash utensils was with beadwork (Tyrrell 1968: 88). Many examples of this were seen in the field.

A fine example was collected at Goedgedacht, Nebo (1972), (SAM-10160 (Fig. 48)). It is covered with intricate beadwork of black, dark-green, blue and turquoise beads.

This type of beadwork was also seen at Weltevreden, Groblersdal, (1972).

REPAIR

No information was obtained.



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Fig. 48. Southern Transvaal Ndebele calabash dish, Goedgedacht, Nebo, 1972, SAM-10160.

USES

MILK-FLASKS

Terms: *serorona*—milk calabash (Andries Mahlangu, Goedgedacht, Nebo 1973); *ikapa*—milk calabash (Andries Mahlangu, Goedgedacht, Nebo, 1973).

Ndzundza

Weiss (1963: 20–21) recorded the use of calabash milk-flasks by the Ndzundza and there are two examples in the South African Museum collection (SAM–10154 (Fig. 49) and SAM–10155 (Fig. 50) Ndzundza, Weltevreden, 1972). In both calabashes a small hole was cut in the top of the neck, but none at the bottom, to drain off the whey as was customary among both the Cape and Natal Nguni. Both examples are undecorated.

At Chief Mapoch's place, Weltevreden (1972), informants mentioned the use of wide-necked calabashes as milk containers but these were not seen.

WATER AND BEER FLASKS

Terms: *igapha*—beer calabash (Goedgedacht, Nebo, 1972); *ikapho*—open calabash used for water (Goedgedacht, Nebo, 1972).

Ndzundza

The only information found in the literature concerning the use of calabashes as water and beer flasks is an illustration of a beer calabash with a basketwork lid and a half-calabash cup, both of which are beaded (Tyrrell 1968: 88), and Weiss's statement (1963: 21) that large calabash vessels were used instead of clay pots. There is a specimen in the F. S. Malan Museum (HW 667, Roberts Heights, 1924) with a beaded basketwork lid, and two specimens in the South African Museum (SAM–10153, Weltevreden, Groblersdal, 1972 and SAM–10160, Goedgedacht, Nebo 1972 (See Fig. 48)). The latter is decorated with an intricate cover of black, dark-green, blue and turquoise beads.

Informants at Weltevreden, Groblersdal (1972), and Goedgedacht, Nebo (1972), confirmed the use of both water and beer calabashes. Containers for water seen in these areas were, however, dishes—calabashes cut in half. At Goedgedacht, Nebo (1972), informants stated that the latter were mainly used by women and that the beaded calabash dishes were only used on special occasions, e.g. weddings.

COSMETIC AND MEDICINE FLASKS

No information was found in the literature, museum collections or in the field concerning the use of calabashes as cosmetic or medicine containers.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Musical bow

Terms: *isigube*—musical bow (Weiss 1963: 21).

Ndzundza

Apart from Weiss's brief reference (1963: 21), where it was mentioned that a

calabash resonator was used, no information about the use of musical bows was found in the literature, museum collections or in the field.

SNUFF-BOXES

Ndzundza

Weiss (1963: 21) briefly referred to the use of a calabash as a snuff-container by a diviner. No further description was given.

No museum specimens were seen and no information was obtained in the field.

SPOONS, SCOOPS AND LADLES

Terms: *inkonyane sekopo*—beer ladle (Goedgedacht, Nebo, 1972).

Ndzundza

The only reference found in the literature regarding these utensils was by



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Fig. 49. Ndzundza milk calabash, Weltevreden, Groblersdal, 1972, SAM-10154. Note the outer skin which has not been scraped off properly.

Tyrrell (1968: 88), where a beaded gourd cup was depicted. No museum specimens of spoons, scoops or ladles were seen.

The Ndzundza at Goedgedacht, Nebo (1972), confirmed the use of ladles for drinking beer. These ladles, *inkonyane sekopo*, were said to be used by men.

Manala

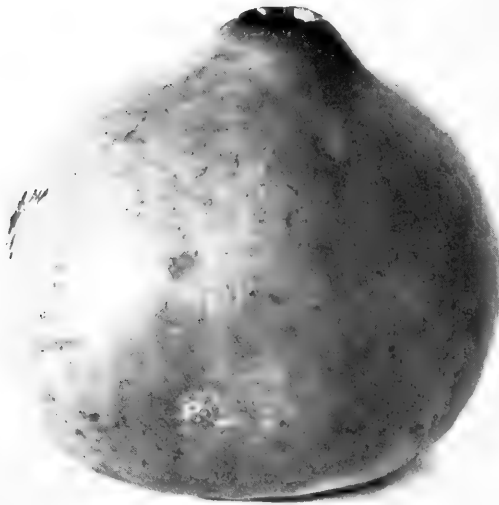
No information was obtained from any source about the use of calabashes by southern Transvaal Ndebele people other than the Ndzundza.

SUMMARY

In the preparation of gourds the fruit was either boiled in water to soften the inside and then scraped or scooped out, or water was poured into the gourd and it was left to rot for a few days, and boiled after being scraped out.

The only decoration of calabashes seen among the southern Transvaal Ndebele was the use of beadwork.

As among the other groups calabashes were mainly used as household utensils, i.e. milk, water and beer containers, ladles and dishes, but a calabash snuff-box and a resonator on a musical bow were also recorded.



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Fig. 50. Ndzundza milk calabash, Weltevreden, Groblersdal, 1972, SAM-10155.

Compared with the situation among the Cape and Natal Nguni, gourds are relatively little used among the southern Transvaal Ndebele. This might be explained by Weiss's contention that the gourd has only recently been introduced into their culture.

NORTHERN TRANSVAAL NDEBELE

CULTIVATION

No information was obtained about the cultivation of gourds by the northern Transvaal Ndebele.

PREPARATION

No information about the preparation of gourds was found in the literature.

Recent field trips, however, showed that the method of preparation used by the Moletlane and Letwaba of the northern Transvaal Ndebele was very similar to that of the southern Transvaal Ndebele.

At Chief Gekana's homestead, Zebediela (1972), the method described differed slightly according to whether the gourd was to be used as a dish or a flask. In both cases the gourd was boiled for about half an hour. For the dish it was cut in half before boiling, the seeds were removed and the rind was scraped from both the inside and outside with a spoon and the dish was then left to dry.

For the flask a hole was made at the top. After the boiling a knife was used to clean out the flask. The utensil was then also left to dry. Before it was used, it was again washed and cleaned out.

Among the northern Transvaal Ndebele there has been a considerable Sotho influence. This is especially evident from some terms that the Ndebele have adopted for certain utensils, e.g. *sego*—a calabash vessel.

DECORATION

No information was obtained in the literature nor were any museum specimens seen.

Two decorative techniques were seen in use in the field: one was by covering the calabash with beadwork (Mashashane, Pietersburg, 1967), and the other by branding (Chief Gekana's homestead, Zebediela, 1972). The latter was on a dish and the decoration was done very much in the style of the neighbouring Sotho.

USES

MILK-FLASKS

No information was obtained about the use of calabashes for holding milk.

WATER AND BEER FLASKS

Terms: *nkho*—beer calabash (Mashashane, Pietersburg, 1967); *tsomela*—calabash drinking vessel (NASKO 61/145, Potgietersrus, 1961); *sephungo*—calabash used for drinking and serving beer (Mashashane, Pietersburg, 1967).

No information was obtained from the literature.

At Pietersburg (1967), Letwaba informants stated that a large calabash, *nkho*, with a small hole cut at the top was used for both water and beer. At Mashashane, Pietersburg (1967), a calabash, *sephungo*, was used for drinking and serving beer. One example of a drinking vessel, *tsomela*, was seen in a museum collection (NASKO 61/145, Potgietersrus, 1961 (Fig. 51)). This was an elongated calabash cut off well below the top.

DISHES

Terms: *mukhombe*—a calabash dish used for porridge (Letwaba, Pietersburg, 1967); *sego*—a calabash dish (Moletlane, Zebediela, 1972).

Moletlane informants at Zebediela, Potgietersrus (1967), and Letwaba informants at Mashashane, Pietersburg (1967), stated that calabashes cut in half were commonly used as dishes, either for porridge, water or beer. Many examples of these were seen (Fig. 52).

No further information was obtained from the literature nor were any museum specimens seen.

MEDICINE FLASKS

According to Letwaba informants (Pietersburg, 1967), doctors used small beaded calabashes as medicine flasks. These were not seen, nor was information obtained from any other source.



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Fig. 51. Northern Transvaal Ndebele calabash drinking vessel, Potgietersrus, 1961, NASKO 61/145.



Fig. 52. Moletlane (northern Transvaal Ndebele) calabash dish, Chief Gekana, Zebediela, 1972.

No information was obtained from any source about the use of calabash cosmetic flasks, resonators for musical instruments, penis-sheaths, objects of ritual, snuff-boxes, spoons, scoops or ladles.

SUMMARY

Very little other than negative information was obtained in the field, and the impression gained was that with the exception of dishes, calabashes were not often used nowadays.

The main point of interest was that from the few objects seen, the Sotho influence on the Ndebele culture was obvious. A good example was the calabash dish, *sego*, seen at Chief Gekana's homestead, Zebediela. The branded decoration of the dish showed the strong Sotho influence.

RHODESIAN NDEBELE

CULTIVATION

The successful growing of calabashes depends on the amount of rain a specific area has had. At one homestead (Umncondo, Essexvale, 1973) no calabashes could be grown that season due to the shortage of rain. In a good season, however, all the different sizes were grown. When cleaning out the gourd a few seeds (*intanga*) were kept to be planted in the following year (Dombe kraal,

Tjolutjo, 1973). They were usually kept in a gourd (Hope Fountain, Essexvale, 1973).

PREPARATION

Three methods of preparation were recorded.

1. This method was found to be the most often used: the gourd was taken off the plant when the shell was quite hard or, as in one case, the gourd was left till it fell off the plant (Godi, Essexvale, 1973). A hole was cut in the top of the gourd and as much of the inside taken out as possible, in order to create sufficient room for the water to be poured in. The water was left in the gourd for approximately five days. The gourd was then emptied of the water, the flesh scraped out and the outer skin scraped off. Before leaving the calabash finally to dry out, the inside was again rinsed and cleaned out (Bubude, Ishaba, and Dombe, Tjolutjo, 1973; Godi, and Hope Fountain, Essexvale 1973).

2. This method corresponded to the first method with the one exception that, instead of using cold water, hot water was poured into the gourd. The rest of the process, however, was the same (near Umncondo, Essexvale, 1973).

3. After the ripe, full-grown gourd had been taken off the plant, or left to fall off, a hole was cut and the seeds scraped out with the hands. After cleaning the inside, the outer skin was scraped off with a knife. Nothing further was done to the gourd (Godi, Essexvale, 1973).

A similar technique was used in the preparation of ladles, except that the gourd was first left to dry out before a hole was cut to scoop out the seeds (Ishaba, Tjolutjo, 1973).

According to information obtained at Hope Fountain, Essexvale (1973), a special technique was used for cleaning out gourds to be used as milk calabashes. A hole was cut into the top and some of the flesh was scooped out. Cattle urine was poured into it and it was then left for about five days for the flesh to rot. Before scraping out the inside, the gourd was shaken and the flesh stirred up well. After this, water was poured into the calabash and again left for five days. Then the hollowed-out calabash was cleaned out to remove any remaining flesh (Hope Fountain, Essexvale, 1973).

DECORATION

Muller and Snelleman (1893, pl. 11, Figs 18–19) depict calabashes decorated with brass wire. Decoration on the shell of the calabash was made in several ways. One was to outline the pattern of the design by pricking it with an awl which, however, did not completely perforate the shell. The holes were then smeared with fat (vaseline nowadays) and covered with charcoal (Tshaba, Tjolutjo, 1973; SAM-1345, Empanjeni, Plumtree, 1911 (Fig. 57)). Another method was to scrape the design on the gourd shell while it was still green, leave it to dry and give it no further treatment (near Dombe homestead, Tjolutjo,

1973). A third method was to brand the design on the dry shell as seen on rattles (near Dombe, Tjolutjo, 1973).

REPAIR

No references were found in the literature concerning the repair of calabashes.

The general repair technique, according to field information, was first to prick holes around the break with an awl. The break was then stitched by threading a fine thread through the holes. Darning with sinew across these initial threads covered and reinforced the break (near Umncondo homestead, Essexvale, 1973; Bubude School, Tjolutjo, 1973) (Figs 53–54).



Fig. 53. Rhodesian Ndebele repair of calábash, Bubude School, Tjolutjo, 1973.

USES

MILK, WATER AND BEER FLASKS

Terms: *igula*—milk calabash (Tjolutjo, 1973); *iqaga*—beer calabash (Essexvale, 1973); *ichaga*—beer calabash (near Dombe, Tjolutjo, 1973).

In the literature Holub (1893: 185) stated that calabashes were used as containers for both water and corn.

No museum specimens were seen.

Field information confirmed the use of milk and beer calabashes. Milk calabashes were closed by using a wooden stopper, whereas the beer calabashes were left standing open. At Bubude School, Tjolutjo (1973), a milk calabash was seen with a wooden stopper which fitted tightly into a neck of five or six rows of basketwork attached to the neck of the calabash. At Dombe homestead, Tjolutjo (1973), the wooden stopper was fitted into the opening lined with the sheath leaves of a bulb (Fig. 55), no doubt to make it fit properly.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Rattle

Terms: *iwoso*—rattle (near Dombe homestead, Tjolutjo, 1973).

No information was obtained from the literature and only one museum specimen was seen: a calabash rattle decorated with an incised design. It was col-



Fig. 54. Rhodesian Ndebele repair of calabash, Bubude School, Tjolutjo, 1973.

lected at the Sabi-Lundi junction (Collection of Miss I. McCalman, Hope Fountain, Bulawayo).

Calabash rattles were also seen in use in the field. Two holes were cut into the cleaned-out calabash: one on top and the other in the base. Little stones were then put into the calabash. A tapered wooden handle was pushed through the two holes and fastened at the top with a peg to hold it in place. The calabash was decorated with a branded design (near Dombe homestead, Tjolojjo, 1973) (Fig. 56).

PENIS-SHEATH

Terms: *umncwado*—penis-sheath (Summers & Pagden 1970: 28).

Summers and Pagden recorded the use of calabash penis-sheaths which formed part of a man's dress. In previous times a man was regarded as not fully dressed without one.



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Fig. 55. Rhodesian Ndebele milk calabash, Dombe homestead, Tjolojjo, 1973.

No museum specimens were seen nor was any information obtained in the field.

RITUAL OBJECTS

Thomas (1926: 45) referred to a short rite performed before a bridal feast when the bride was being prepared for her marriage. During this rite a calabash filled with the crushed roots of a certain plant was placed on her head as she knelt before the doctor. He stirred the mixture with a stick till it frothed over and she then proceeded to wash her face with it.

SNUFF-BOXES

The only references found in the literature to the use of calabash snuff-boxes was an illustration by Muller & Snelleman (1893, pl. 11, figs 18–19). These were said to be decorated with metal wire. No museum specimens were seen nor was any information obtained in the field.



Fig. 56. Rhodesian Ndebele rattles, near Dombe homestead, Tjolotjo, 1973.

SPOONS, SCOOPS AND LADLES

Terms: *inkhezo*—ladle (Tshaba, Tjolutjo, 1973); *inkezo*—ladle (SAM-1345, 1911); *nkhezo*—beer ladle (near Umncondo homestead, Essexvale, Rhodesia, 1973); *ukhezo*—long-handled calabash (Dombe homestead, Tjolutjo, 1973).

A gourd ladle decorated with an incised cross-hatched design was used for serving beer and water (SAM-1345, Empandeni, Plumtree, 1911) (Fig. 57). The present-day use of ladles was confirmed by informants in the Tjolutjo and Essexvale districts (1973). No information was obtained about spoons and scoops.



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Fig. 57. Rhodesian Ndebele ladle, Empandeni Mission, Plumtree, 1911, SAM-1345.

SUMMARY

The cultivation and preparation of gourd utensils among the Rhodesian Ndebele follow the general pattern observed among the groups previously discussed.

The gourds were mainly converted into household utensils. The use of calabash containers for milk, beer and water was common and the larger gourds were preferred. Calabash ladles were also seen to be in common use. Calabash rattles were seen, but the use of snuff-boxes and penis-sheaths is only recorded in the literature and they were not seen in the field. One reference in the literature indicates a ritual use.

DISCUSSION

The gourd, by virtue of its shape, durability and varying size and the ease with which it can be converted into a container or utensil, was and still is extremely useful to the Nguni.

Although the gourd is grown in most of the areas inhabited by the Nguni, its successful cultivation depends greatly on suitable climatic conditions in the particular area.

In none of the areas was there a rigid specialization—both men and women

prepared the calabashes, though it tended to be more often a woman's occupation.

In order to prepare a gourd for use the flesh of the fruit was softened and scraped out and the shell was left to dry. Methods throughout the area varied very little. The main difference was whether the gourd was boiled (northern Nguni) or not (southern Nguni). No taboos connected with preparation were recorded.

The only tools used were cutting and scraping instruments, nowadays an ordinary knife and spoon, and an awl for decoration and repair.

The method of decoration is the factor which showed the greatest degree of difference in calabash-working among the Nguni people. In general it was found that milk calabashes were not decorated but water and beer calabashes occasionally had a beadwork collar. The northern Transvaal Ndebele had been influenced by the Pedi in their choice of design and style of branding of calabash dishes. The Zulu were particularly adept at the art of wirework and there are many fine examples of snuff-boxes decorated in this manner. The Cape Nguni, on the other hand, preferred to decorate medicine flasks, snuff-boxes and cosmetic containers with beadwork. Among the Cape Nguni a snuff-box was generally covered entirely with beadwork in a definite pattern of a rectangular design. With the exception of those in the south, the Natal Nguni rarely covered snuff-boxes and medicine flasks entirely with beads. Where they did use beads as decoration it was generally in the form of strips of beadwork sewn on to the shell. Beadwork and branding were popular forms of decoration among the southern and northern Transvaal Ndebele. So little information was obtained on methods of decoration of calabash utensils among the Swazi and Rhodesian Ndebele that no comparison can be made, but the only record of the use of a dye came from the Swazi.

The method of repair of cracks was basically the same throughout; that is to sew the crack together and then to darn through the sewing. One instance was recorded from the Cape Nguni where this mend had been covered with a paste.

Calabash flasks for milk were recorded among all the Nguni people except the northern Transvaal Ndebele but it is unlikely that the latter did not use them. Water and beer vessels are still used throughout the group.

Scoops and ladles were used to ladle out beer, water or grain. Smaller ladles were sometimes used as spoons from which to eat. Calabash medicine and cosmetic flasks were recorded among all except the Swazi and the Matabele. There is no record of the use of calabash snuff-boxes by the northern Transvaal Ndebele, but all other groups used them and they were usually decorated. Calabashes were used as resonators on the musical bow among the Cape and Natal Nguni, Swazi and the southern Transvaal Ndebele, but were not recorded among the others though they were probably used. The existence of a calabash drum was recorded among the Cape Nguni, where, according to Kirby, the idea was probably borrowed from the Hottentots, and there is an unconfirmed reference to its use among the Natal Nguni.

The literature refers to various miscellaneous uses of calabashes, e.g. among the Cape and Natal Nguni the bowl of the calabash was employed as a container for fat for a lamp. According to the literature the Natal Nguni used calabash chamber-pots and combs made from the shells of gourds. One single museum specimen was seen where a calabash had been used as a water vessel for a Mpondo dagga-pipe. Ritual uses of the calabash were recorded in the device of the 'talking calabash', which was used by the Cape and Natal Nguni as a method of divining the direction from which a disease had come or the person who had sent it. Calabashes were used as ritual objects in the important First Fruits ceremonies of the Swazi and, in former times, of the Zulu.

In one area, Bergville, it was stated that if the gourd crop was not good gourds were bought from elsewhere and then prepared. No other evidence was collected on the subject of trade of either the unworked gourds or the finished objects. As far as was seen people grew and prepared calabashes for themselves and turned them into utensils.

The older literature, particularly, is notably lacking in references to the use and working of calabashes, so that this survey has been based largely on the present position. It is realized that more time in the field was needed, but the general impression gained was that all sections of the Nguni find calabashes a useful commodity especially as milk containers but that they are losing ground to modern store-bought articles.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BM	British Museum.
DC	Duggan-Cronin Bantu Gallery, Kimberley.
EL	East London Museum.
HW	Hamilton-Welsh Collection, F. S. Malan Museum, Fort Hare.
NAS	National Museum, Bloemfontein.
NASKO	National Open-air and Cultural History Museum, Pretoria.
NM	Natal Museum.
PE	Port Elizabeth Museum.
SAM	South African Museum.
UCT	University of Cape Town Collection at the South African Museum.

6. SYSTEMATIC papers must conform with the *International code of zoological nomenclature* (particularly Articles 22 and 51).

Names of new taxa, combinations, synonyms, etc., when used for the first time, must be followed by the appropriate Latin (not English) abbreviation, e.g. gen. nov., sp. nov., comb. nov., syn. nov., etc.

An author's name when cited must follow the name of the taxon without intervening punctuation and not be abbreviated; if the year is added, a comma must separate author's name and year. The author's name (and date, if cited) must be placed in parentheses if a species or subspecies is transferred from its original genus. The name of a subsequent user of a scientific name must be separated from the scientific name by a colon.

Synonymy arrangement should be according to chronology of names, i.e. all published scientific names by which the species previously has been designated are listed in chronological order, with all references to that name following in chronological order, e.g.:

Family *Nuculanidae*

Nuculana (Lembulus) bicuspidata (Gould, 1845)

Figs 14–15A

Nucula (Leda) bicuspidata Gould, 1845: 37.

Leda plicifera A. Adams, 1856: 50.

Laeda bicuspidata Hanley, 1859: 118, pl. 228 (fig. 73). Sowerby, 1871: pl. 2 (figs 8a–b).

Nucula largillierti Philippi, 1861: 87.

Leda bicuspidata: Nickles, 1950: 163, fig. 301; 1955: 110. Barnard, 1964: 234, figs 8–9.

Note punctuation in the above example:

comma separates author's name and year

semicolon separates more than one reference by the same author

full stop separates references by different authors

figures of plates are enclosed in parentheses to distinguish them from text-figures

dash, not comma, separates consecutive numbers

Synonymy arrangement according to chronology of bibliographic references, whereby the year is placed in front of each entry, and the synonym repeated in full for each entry, is not acceptable.

In describing new species, one specimen must be designated as the holotype; other specimens mentioned in the original description are to be designated paratypes; additional material not regarded as paratypes should be listed separately. The complete data (registration number, depository, description of specimen, locality, collector, date) of the holotype and paratypes must be recorded, e.g.:

Holotype

SAM-A13535 in the South African Museum, Cape Town. Adult female from mid-tide region, King's Beach, Port Elizabeth (33.51S, 25.39E), collected by A. Smith, 15 January 1973.

Note standard form of writing South African Museum registration numbers, date and geographical positions.

7. SPECIAL HOUSE RULES

Capital initial letters

- (a) The Figures, Maps and Tables of the paper when referred to in the text
e.g. '... the Figure depicting *C. namacolus* ...'; '... in *C. namacolus* (Fig. 10) ...'
- (b) The prefixes of prefixed surnames in all languages, when used in the text, if not preceded by initials or full names
e.g. Du Toit but A. L. du Toit; Von Huene but F. von Huene
- (c) Scientific names, but not their vernacular derivatives
e.g. Therocephalia, but therocephalian

Punctuation should be loose, omitting all not strictly necessary

Reference to the author should be expressed in the third person

Roman numerals should be converted to arabic, except when forming part of the title of a book or article, such as

'Revision of the Crustacea. Part VIII. The Amphipoda.'

Specific name must not stand alone, but be preceded by the generic name or its abbreviation to initial capital letter, provided the same generic name is used consecutively.

Name of new genus or species is not to be included in the title: it should be included in the abstract, counter to Recommendation 23 of the Code, to meet the requirements of Biological Abstracts.

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