

Part 4: The Ancient Kings and the search for greener pastures

200-400 years
CE Migration
south

Possibly as a result of population pressure, climatic changes, lack of grazing and wars, agro-pastoralist communities migrate southward along the African Great Rift valley.

400-445 CE
Iron smelting /
agriculture

A culture known as the Silverleaves (named after their pottery) arrives in Swaziland, bringing with them agriculture (sorghum), domestic animals (sheep and goats) and the iron smelting techniques.

It is not known what language or cultural group they are associated with.

Similar pottery finds related to the Silverleaves have been found in southern Mozambique and Limpopo Province.

Sorghum bicolor, commonly called sorghum or great millet is a grass species cultivated for its grain, which is used for food, both for animals and humans.



Sorghum originated in northern Africa, and is now cultivated widely in tropical and subtropical regions.

Sorghum is the world's fifth most important cereal crop after rice, wheat, maize and barley.

500-1300 CE
Bantu settlers
arrive

Bantu-speaking peoples arrive from north of the Limpopo River, displacing the Khoisan as they migrate southward.

These agro-pastoralists colonise much of the summer rainfall region that is suitable for growing their staple of sorghum and grazing their cattle.

They also extract the iron ore, smelt it, and trade it widely throughout the region.

600-1500's
Arab traders

For more than a thousand years, Arabs trade extensively on the east coast of Africa, regularly coming as far south as Inhambane/Maxixe in Mozambique.

For centuries, first the Arabs, and then the Portuguese bring porcelain, colourful glass beads and other desirable commodities to trade for slaves and ivory along the eastern shores of Africa.

They stick to the coast, and trade with Bantu speaking people from the interior that supply to this lucrative trade.

The glass beads have been found at locations as far inland as the centre of Swaziland.

This is not evidence that Arab or Portuguese traders visited these places, it is evidence of trade routes to the interior.

1300-1500 CE
Khoisan/Sotho
/Nguni

By 1400 the Sotho speaking communities have arrived and settled in Swaziland from where they continue to populate the highveld interior.

Nguni speaking communities have settled along the south-eastern coastal belt and inland up to the Drakensberg foothills by the 1500's.

The Khoisan maintain their hold over the arid interior, and the southern and south western Cape winter rainfall regions, where the climate is unsuitable for growing sorghum, the staple crop of the Bantu speaking peoples.

1400's - 1600's Move inland Nguni farmers begin to move inland into grassland areas. Migrations also continue ever further south, bringing them into contact with other cultures.

1500's Arabs and Portuguese had opened trading routes to the southeastern coast of Africa as early as the beginning of the 16th century and they had already made contact with the Maputo river settlements.

They remained near the coast and did not travel far inland.

1600's Nguni peoples start to probe inland toward Lubombo and Pongola in search of better grazing and land that is easier to protect.

1460-1500 CE
Portuguese mariners

Various Portuguese maritime voyages of exploration occur during this period, in order to establish a sea route to India, and break the Arab monopoly with trade to the East.

1488

Bartolomeu Dias becomes the first European mariner to round the southern tip of Africa by sea, thus opening the way for a maritime route to Asia.

** According to Greek historian Herodotus of Halicarnassus, Necho II (pharaoh of Egypt) sent*

Phoenician sailors out from the Gulf of Arabia to circumnavigate the African continent around 610 BCE. The journey is said to have taken 3 years.

On 3 February Dias and his crew approached the coast at São Bras (now Mossel Bay), where Khoikhoi pelted them with stones. They continued further east along the coast.

On 12 March, they planted a padirão at Kwaaihoek (near Port Elizabeth) before turning back towards Portugal.

1497 Vasco da Gama sets sail from Portugal in July with four ships.

Vasco da Gama rounds the Cape of Good Hope in late November and heads further east, making landfall north of the Limpopo River in present day Mozambique.

This is the first encounter with the Nguni by a maritime expedition in recorded history. (Most probably Tsonga).

1498 Da Gama makes several more stops on the east African coast of Mozambique, encountering Arab traders North of the Zambezi River Mouth. He makes two more stops at Mombasa and Malindi (both now in Kenya).

In May of 1498, Da Gama lands in India at Calicut.

1355-1744 CE	The Ancient Kings	Not much is known about the Ancient Kings of what was later to become the Swazi people.
	Nkosi I (±1355-1400)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This listing is provided for completion, but it is only from Ngwane II that a proper record has been maintained. The dates in brackets correspond to their reign, not their lifespan. It is commonly accepted that Dlamini I (also known as Matalatala) was the first king to migrate south of the Nkomati and settle near Maputo in the mid 1400's. He was able to increase his followers by conquering many clans along the Lubombo and is regarded officially as the first King of the Swazi.
	Ngwane I (±1400-1435)	
	Dlamini I (±1435-1465)	
	Mswati I (±1480-1520)	
	Ngwane II (±1520-1550)	
	Dlamini II (±1555-1600)	
	Nkosi II (±1600-1640)	
	Mavuso I (±1645-1680)	
	Magudulela (±1685-1685)	
	Ludvonga I (±1685-1715)	

King Dlamini III
*(reigned:
 ±1720-1744)*

Dlamini III, also known as Hlubi, is one of the ancient Kings that led the people now known as the Swazis between 1720 and 1744.

He is considered the link between the settlements at Delagoa Bay (Maputo) and the settlements near the Pongola River where it cuts through the Lubombo Mountains.

His people travelled with the Ndwandwe whose lineage is closely related.

He was the father of Ngwane III - the first modern King of the Swazis.