

Colony of Natal: Dinizulu, King of the Country of the Zulu

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Form: Circular with and without attached loop

By: ?

Date: 1885

Ref: Laidlaw: 0157;

Variations:

Size	Metal	Mass	Value
45 mm	Bronze		Rare

Edge: Plain.

Obverse: In the centre, a shield surrounded by a wreath of laurel (left) and palm frond (right). Above shield a pole with a ring around it topped by a ball of feathers with an ostrich plume on each side. On the shield, a Zulu warrior's shield behind which, eight crossed Zulu assegais (spears), four on the left and four on the right. The Zulu shield divided horizontally into three parts: upper third, a Secretary bird holding a snake in its beak, in the middle, typical pierced slats of a Zulu shield and, at the bottom, a crocodile.

Reverse: Inscriptions in Zulu, across: "UKU / (space for recipient's name) / BGOKUBA FANELA (to / because deserving)". On a ball of feathers legend above: "DINIZULU INKOS KA ILIZWE AMAZULU (Dinizulu, King of the country of the Zulu" and below: "EMNYATI 1885".

Notes: Reference: Africana Curiosities ed. Anna Smith p 42.

Emnyati was (and still is) a mission station outside of Vryheid in northern Natal.

Dinizulu was the son of King Cetshwayo who led the Zulu nation against the British in the Zulu War of 1879. This ended in defeat for the Zulus and the fragmentation of the Zulu Kingdom. A period of civil warfare followed amongst the Zulus, aided and abetted by white Boer mercenaries, during which Cetshwayo died, leaving the young Dinizulu with the task of restoring the Zulu Kingdom. With help from a mercenary force led by General Louis Botha, known as the Dinizulu Volunteers, Dinizulu defeated his brother Usibepu at the Battle of Tshaneni on June 5, 1884. Internal strife continued eventually leading to the intervention of the British, the capture of Dinizulu in 1888 and his imprisonment on the island of St. Helena.

The award medal originates from this period, but it not known for which supporters of Dinizulu these medals were intended.

Certainly, Louis Botha, better known as a leader of the Boer forces during the Anglo-Boer War and subsequently as the first prime minister of the Union of South Africa, was a firm friend. It was he who ordered the release of Dinizulu from a second period of imprisonment following the Bhambhata rebellion in 1906.

A statue of Louis Botha can be found corner of Berea Road and Warwick Avenue in Durban, and it is fitting that a new statue honouring Dinizulu was erected in 2008 so that the two stand side-by-side.