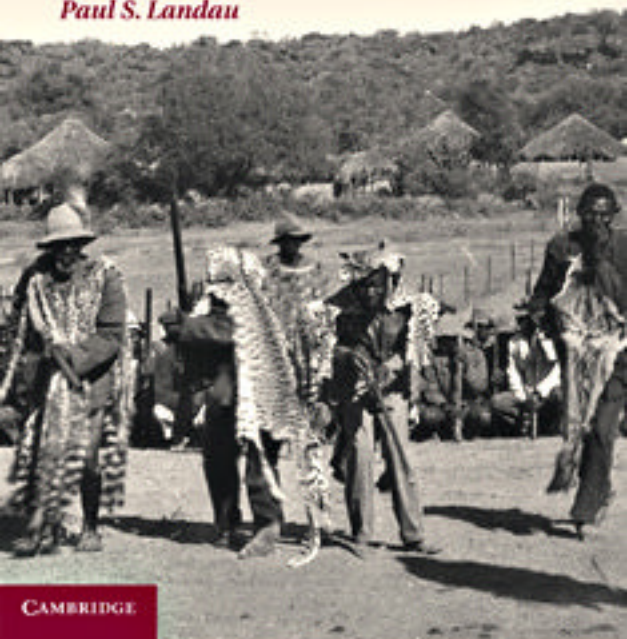


Popular Politics in the History of South Africa, 1400–1948

Paul S. Landau



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Popular Politics in the History of South Africa, 1400–1948

Popular Politics in the History of South Africa, 1400–1948, offers a newly inclusive vision of South Africa's past. Drawing largely from original sources, Paul S. Landau presents a history of the politics of the country's people, from the time of their early settlements in the elevated heartlands, through the colonial era, to the dawn of Apartheid. A practical tradition of mobilization, alliance, and amalgamation persisted, mutated, and occasionally vanished from view; it survived against the odds in several forms, in tribalism, Christian assemblies, and other, seemingly hybrid movements; and it continues today. Landau treats southern Africa broadly, with an increasing concentration on the southern highveld and an ultimate focus on a particular transnational movement called the "Samuelites." He shows how people's politics in South Africa were translated and transformed, but never entirely suppressed.

Paul S. Landau is an associate professor of history at the University of Maryland, College Park. He is co-editor of *Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa* (2002) and the author of *The Realm of the Word: Language, Gender and Christianity in a Southern African Kingdom* (1995). Professor Landau's work has appeared in journals such as the *Journal of African History* and the *Journal of Religious History*.

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College Park*



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In 1624 our forefathers lived in South Africa as heathen under [their] own chiefs.... **our race was a mixed race even then.**

A. A. S. le Fleur, address to his followers, 1896, UNISA,
E. M. S. le Fleur Collection, A. A. S. le Fleur, "Short History,"
1896, handwritten notes made by the Griqua leader.

Gumpie [Daniel Kgompini] ... held meetings [in which he] informs those attending that he is a subject of Chief Samuel Moroka.... **his discussions being on Religion and Politics badly mixed up ...**

Captain's report, South African Police, Oudtshoorn,
18 October 1921, Pretoria, SAB, JUS 528, 6515/29,
"Gumpie" (Kgompini), traveling the country
with his white employer, a salesman.

Many small tribes mentioned in tradition and history have lost their original cohesion and unity.... [T]he **diversity of peoples making up the membership** of a tribe is reflected in some instances in differences in custom.

Professor Isaac Schapera, *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom*, 1938, Oxford: IAI, 1938;
quotes are sequential and taken from 4-5.

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	page viii
<i>Preface: The Birth of the Political</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xv
1 Eyewitness Engagements (Highveld political discourse at the start of the 1800s)	i
2 History before Tribes (Partnership, alliance, and power)	42
3 Translations (Missionaries and the invention of Christianity)	74
4 The Incipient Order (Moroka's reign, 1828–1880)	108
5 Mixed People (The Samuelites, the Griqua, and other subjectivities, 1880–1928)	162
6 Twentieth-Century Tribes	214
<i>Primary and Archival Sources</i>	251
<i>Bibliography</i>	257
<i>Index</i>	285

Figures

1.1	The South African highveld, showing the 1,000-meter line. After a map drawn by the author.	page 21
1.2	Vaal-Vet-Valsch (Nta)-Harts headwaters, mapped with the modern “N-12” highway from Kimberley to Vereeniging. After a map drawn by the author.	26
2.1	Great Zimbabwe: The famous World Heritage Site stone ruins near Masvingo, Zimbabwe: the stone pillar. Photo by author.	43
2.2	Map of S-group, and 1,000-m. lines in southern Africa, marking the highveld and the Zimbabwean highlands, with place names. After a map drawn by author, using various sources, including Connah, “A Question of Economic Basis”; Denbow, “The Toutswe Tradition”; Huffman, <i>Handbook</i> ; and Ellenberger, <i>History of the Basuto</i> .	48
2.3	Kaditshwene’s center courts: stone walls and rondavels at “kgosing” (chief’s place). Courtesy of Jan Boeyens. A similar map appears in Boeyens, “In Search of Kaditshwene.”	65
4.1	Map of the “Middle” River (Mohokare, or Caledon) Valley, so-called in the era of its emergence as Moshoeshoe’s agrarian heartland. After a map drawn by the author, using maps in Sanders, <i>Moshoeshoe</i> , and Ellenberger, <i>History of the Basuto</i> .	111
4.2	Moroka’s people’s trek to Thaba Nchu, 1832–1833. After a map drawn by the author, using maps in Etherington, <i>The Great Treks</i> , and Molema, <i>Chief Moroka</i> .	113

- 4.3 Gustav Fritsch, photograph; Hugo Büchner, copper engraving: Tafel XX: “Ba-kuéna, Barolong,” from *Die Eingeborenen Süd-Afrika’s Atlas*, 1872. 148
- 5.1 Map of Tati District, 1915. After a map drawn by the author, from “Plan of the Tati Territory,” Botswana National Archives, Assistant Commissioner, 5/32, Revised Survey. 175

Preface: The Birth of the Political

This book weaves together several stories about popular politics in South Africa in the course of making the argument that those politics have been largely misconstrued. It begins, for all intents and purposes, with [Chapter 1](#). Here, briefly, are a few of its most basic assertions for those who would like a preview. First, the case is made that the people of South Africa were historically well equipped to embrace and absorb strangers. Hybridity lay at the core of their subcontinental political traditions. Nineteenth-century European newcomers were different and attempted to repudiate mixing, politically and otherwise, albeit with only partial success. It was they who characterized, or mis-characterized, Africans as perennial *tribesmen*. Second, the book is about what happened to popular politics in the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. South African modes of self-rule comprised a venerable political tradition, one that deprecated skin color and language as barriers and elevated brotherhoods, rankings, and amalgamations. The tradition preceded tribes and survived through them and beyond them. Ultimately it fed into the politics of the twentieth century, informing South Africa's growing independent Christian churches, other hard-to-catalogue popular movements, rural resistance, and eventually, even the nationalism of the African National Congress.

Popular Politics in the History of South Africa, 1400–1948, offers a revised view of what happened to people's efforts to mobilize themselves in their own interest through much of the colonial era. Therefore it is also an explanation for previous representations of Africans and brown-skinned people. It is a study of politics in places and moments where politics were not usually said to exist, and it is an account of that omission. It is a history of suppression, violence, and warfare, and it is about how that history changed the meaning of what people were saying when they talked about their destiny and their heritage. The book charts the eventual defeat of the majority's ability to rule themselves on the land according to their own logic; and it marks from that catastrophe two effects: the production of ethnic identity, and the formulation among peasants of the religious domain. Both geneses erased the signs of their arrival, as if ethnicity and religious worship had always been there. *Popular*

Politics is about more than defeat, however; it is about the perseverance of a complex politics, often camouflaged or shadowed by other institutions: politics in attacking tribalist assumptions, and within assertions of tribal perogatives; politics infusing Christianity and ancestrally motivated movements; politics that confounded, sometimes by design, the attentions of appointed “Native” experts. Granting the overwhelming impact of colonialism and state racism on people’s ability to mobilize, I argue that ordinary denizens of South Africa continued to find ways to tap their own store of knowledge and praxis. They were the inheritors of a flexible and adaptable political tradition, one that was very hard to smash.

* * * * *

Quite often in historical literature, Africans are depicted as prepolitical or as politically naive, mired in irrational beliefs, and they are imagined to have stayed that way until modern nationalism began to pull them free. They are either dignified with praises for their spirituality, or said to have lived in thrall to superstitions that divided them and rendered them ineffectual, but the common thread is that religion ruled their lives. In this book, everyone’s basic rationality is assumed. Threshers and winnowers, waged farm hands, colonial officials, cooks, plowmen, tailors, chief’s counselors, schoolteachers, agitators, and preachers are all shown to have struggled to act in sensical and effective ways; they demanded that their understanding of the terrain of action around them be treated as meaningful, and they adapted to the situations around them as well as they could. Under the most difficult circumstances, these people created genuine, if sometimes transient, domains of power. Imperial and state administrators fought against them, but they did not understand them, and most of the time they did not want to. This book argues that historians today must be willing to try to see what these administrators did not.

In its coverage the book aims to elaborate South Africa’s history broadly conceived, and for that reason it may serve as an initiating text. Geographically, it is mostly about the South African highveld, and especially one part of it, the neighborhood around the “Middle” or “Willow” River (Mohokare, also known as the Caledon), an area of intensive farming and grazing for centuries. Thematically, it is about how popular sovereignties and rural mobilizations grew and declined in the elevated interior of the country. The movements and modalities outlined herein are not, most often, treated all together, under one rubric; *Popular Politics* shows how they were indeed of a piece, and how, in addition, they were (mis)classified, undermined, and fragmented into *many* pieces. The book looks especially closely at people whose descendents today are called “Coloured,” Sotho, and Tswana; but the reader will see that the simplicity of even this tryptych is deceptive, the end result of nineteenth- and even twentieth-century processes and enforced points of view. The designation “highveld” works better for historical purposes. As it is used here, “highveld” indicates arable and grazing land above 1,000 meters, along with whoever lived on it. Finally, the main narrative thread of the book connects the chiefships of the highveld in

the Hart–Vaal watershed, the Caledon River Valley, and Thaba Nchu, with the “Samuelites,” a peasant movement so-named by the South African historian S. M. Molema. In considering the Samuelites, the general themes of the book are revisited in a concrete and approachable narrative.

The first chapters will show how a historical political praxis gave rise to the great mixed nineteenth-century chiefships on the highveld, and how the same forces helped create the Christian Griqua and filled the pews of the first large Christian churches. Later on, it will be shown that these continuing traditions, although deprived of much of their material basis, ultimately fed many of the peasant movements and organizations in the 1920s, and even some workplace-based associations, including not only the aforementioned Samuelites but also “Garveyism,” South Africa’s independent churches, and the massive International Commercial Workers’ Union or ICU.

The drive to cooperate, mobilize, and thrive in communities on the highveld did not survive unscathed. Instead, it was fractured and channeled into usable forms by peasants and by the state in the difficult circumstances of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Eventually policemen had to monitor public assemblies to keep proper distinctions in place: meetings had to be religious, or cultural, or tribal, but never political, never concerned with changing people’s situations in this world. For a brief period in the 1920s, as the alienation of the land in the fertile valleys and plateaus of the highveld was completed, the old tradition of heterogeneous mobilization surged back to life, dragging discursive fragments out of their places of exile. Like other contemporary movements on the highveld, the Samuelites, a focus here, moved young men to espouse a personal and inner commitment to change. They demanded a return to power over the land and rejected the tyranny of state-supported landlordism and tribal administration. Alarmed, the administrative bureaucracy acted to suppress them and, where possible, to obscure their contours and revise their message.

In telling the story of a South African logic, a popular politics never quite comprehended by empire, never fully engaged, it has been especially important to write entirely in English. Some works of social history that explore “emic” or insider perspectives are reticent to translate fully, relying on foreign terms to lend an irreducible concreteness to ideas. In most cases, however, foreign terms are opaque signs to the English-language reader. In telling history here, in bringing the processes described as much as possible to a wider readership, I translate everything that is spoken at first usage, including so-called tribal names in their pretribal incarnations. With English words as with African-language words, when they are offered, capitalization is avoided. This is to acknowledge the preeminence of speech as opposed to writing, in which no such distinction exists. Hence, to draw these usage guidelines together in a single set of examples, one will read court, or “kraal and court,” for *kgotla*; lords, not Lords, for *dikgosana* or *Makgosi*; chiefdom, not *moraf[h]e* or *kgosing*; crocodile and people of the crocodile, not *kwena*, or *Kwena*, or Crocodile, and so on. After their first appearance, court, chiefdom,

crocodile, and other ordinary words are given further meaning by recovering the history surrounding their usage, not by explaining to the reader how they were used. An exception: *métis* is an exterior word, imposed to group together a range of people who did not designate themselves as a group. And, in addition, the names of persons are mostly left untranslated and are capitalized. By and large, however, the reader may count on seeing translated (English) terms and will be able to grasp the book's arguments by them. In the same spirit, this book refuses to "correct" the spellings of the past and to substitute modern ethnic labels for past, variable spellings. "Sechuana" is for instance used (and capitalized), rather than Setswana, which is a false synonym. The variety of indigenous spellings should not burden the reader, however, because – to repeat the point – he or she is not required to learn any of them.

Further conclusions emerge serially, in each of the six chapters of the book, although the impatient reader can skip to the very end, where I convert them into simple assertions. The first two chapters to follow will demonstrate, broadly, that the political was indeed born deep in the southern African past: it was not a stage that arrived with the demise of chiefs and chiefly loyalties, nor with the first European administrators, nor the coming of Cape-educated young men. Highveld herders and farmers jockeyed with one another to mobilize and mix in newcomers and to legitimate their preferred hierarchies and alliances, participating in a discernible tradition with a deep history. They spoke comprehensibly enough, beginning in the era when they were not yet ambiguous – not yet neither one thing nor the other, but still only they themselves.

Acknowledgments

In all chapters to follow, I participate in a serial dialogue with others' interpretations, some acknowledged in the text or in footnotes, but not always. Many scholars whose work has colored my analysis and my choices of examples, or predicted my interpretations in aspect and tone, or paralleled key parts of my thinking, are noted only once or twice in the text, then left behind, even though my debt is ongoing. I owe as much to those whose work I criticize as to those with whom I agree: to the pioneering ethnographers, missiologists and otherwise, who created the world of knowledge in which I situate myself. As a historian, I owe a debt especially to anthropologists of South Africa, in South Africa, Britain, and the United States, and to their scrupulous and indispensable studies.

The project has relied on the tail end of grants and funding from the Fulbright program of the U.S. government, and then more substantially on funds from Yale University (and the Yale Center for International and Area Studies), from the University of Maryland and the University's Driskell Center; and from the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. I worked in many archival repositories and lived in several places while researching this book, and I cannot thank everyone who helped me, but I must single out Ruth Forchhammer of the Serowe, Khama III Museum; Michelle Pickover of the Cullen Library at the University of the Witwatersrand; Rosemary Seton of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London; Gilbert Mpolokeng of the Botswana National Archives in Gaborone; the Reverend T. Phokontsi of St. Paul's Church in Thaba Nchu; the Reverend Margaret James of the Methodist Mission Center in Harare; John Gay and the Reverend Gay of Maseru; the Reverend W. S. P. Khyaza and Mr. L. A. Tapela of Thekwane (near Plumtree); the staff at the National Library in Cape Town and at the Zimbabwe National Archives in Harare; and Sandra Rowoldt (now Rowoldt-Shell) of the Cory Library at Grahamstown, the last for consistent, repeated, and timely assistance.

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Eric Allina-Pisano, Fiona Vernal, and Roger Levine, graduate students at the time, were invaluable to me. The Africanist librarian Moore Crossey requires a paean recalling another scholarly era. Baruteng Onamile, Rachel Matlhare, and Bruce Bennet were crucial to my research in Botswana and in South Africa. In Johannesburg, Isaak Niehouse and Sandra Waldman, and in Washington, D.C., Joost Wellen, helped me translate Dutch and Afrikaans. At Maryland, Stephan Palmié (now at the University of Chicago) and Saverio Giovacchini, Richard Price, and Hillary Jones offered readings and comments. At various stages, aid and comfort have come from Shula Marks, David Bunn and Jane Taylor, Adam and Jessica Kuper, and Norman Etherington. My thanks go to Elizabeth Elbourne, for a gracious read-through of an early version of several chapters; Carolyn Hamilton and Diana Jeater for early and so critical support; Part Themba Mgadla, Thomas Spear, and Isaac Schapera; and last, and especially, Julie Livingston, for readings and crucial, timely encouragement; Neil Parsons, for opening his home, thoughts, and archaeological sites; and Jan Vansina, who has offered intermittent guidance to me for twenty years, and whom I thank partially with this book, with all its shortcomings.

Elements and sections of chapters have been presented as spoken and circulated papers, over a decade, at Yale University, Harvard University, the University of Botswana, the University of Georgia in Athens, the University of Minnesota, the University of Wisconsin, Johns Hopkins, Brigham Young University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Rutgers University; in three African Studies Association meetings and a Northeastern African Studies Association meeting in Burlington, Vermont; and in further forums outside the United States, in Cape Town, South Africa; Quebec, Canada; Perth, Australia; Gaborone, Botswana; and at Oxford University. Remarks, assistance, readings, encouragement, or cautions pertinent to this book, in these and other forums, have come from Bill Bravman, Tim Burke, Colin Murray, John L. Comaroff, Simon Dagut, Robert Edgar, Bobby Hill, Martin Legassick, Florence Bernault, David Coplan, James Campbell, Clifton Crais, Jim Denbow, Saul Dubow, Sumit Guha, Patrick Harries and his students at Basle; Pier Larson and Jane Guyer and their students at Hopkins; Karen Millbourne, Barry Morton, Tefetso Mothibe, Atieno Odhiambo, and Edward O'Neill; and Charles van Onselen, Terry Ranger, Ciraj Rassool, David Schoenbrün, Luise White, John Wright, and Andrew Zimmerman.

This book is dedicated to Emily. Without her it would not have been worthwhile.

Eyewitness Engagements (Highveld political discourse at the start of the 1800s)

Over the centuries, in the middle of what eventually became South Africa, hundreds of thousands of people lived and labored. They were farmers and livestock-keepers, warriors and poets. They spoke the same language, or incrementally distinguishable dialects of it; they moved about among themselves, married one another, and ranked their princely houses together.

Theirs was a history of settlement on verdant hills, of men and women building a world of ranked communities with cross-cutting loyalties and long-range connections to the Limpopo basin to the north, and the foothills of the Drakensberg range and the grasslands to the east. As the highveld's agrarian towns expanded, they brought together into their midst households, and sometimes whole communities, from the wider world. Most professional travelers could make themselves understood with little effort. Prestigious healers and specialists in rituals, rain-makers, militia-scouts, and cattle-herders covered great distances; women often married away from home, sometimes far away. As a result, authority and culture were disposed across the highveld and its enclosed river valleys in a widely comprehensible tradition, shading up even onto the Zimbabwean highlands on the northern side of the Limpopo Valley. Within this context developed multiethnic chiefships and chiefly partnerships.

Most accounts of South Africa's past summon up a different picture from this, however: a world of *tribes*. Tribes may be designated ethnic groups, or peoples, but the treatment is the same. In its purest form, the tribe constitutes the claim that popular mobilizations among African people were apolitical, customs-determined phenomena. Each tribe has its own heritage, dating back to its split with its parental branch, or to its own unique seed. "Bantu-speakers," separate from "the Khoisan," are hypothesized as having invaded the subcontinent three or six hundred years ago as proto-tribes, "the Hurutshe-Kwena" and "the Kgatla-Rolong," or another such grouping. One also finds "the Tlokwa," "the Sia," "the Phuthing," "Koni," "baThalerwa," "BaPhalane," "Phogole," more and more of them the further back one goes.¹

¹ Beyond the variations on the inclusion of the definite article, note the preferred orthographies' variants re *ba-* / *Ba-* etc. or not – *ba* meaning "people of."

The tendency to tribalize South Africa's past runs deep. It is there, in the very earliest written records from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which constitute the source material for this chapter of this book.² It is still there in the ongoing effort to restore land-rights to South Africans by projecting recent ethnic belonging into the distant past.³ Here it will be argued that agrarian South Africa before the mid-nineteenth century was built not by tribes, but by active pioneers and state-makers. A history of their activities and mobilizations must, however, also chart the development of the tribal idea and its eventual epistemological triumph. The story of the tribe must be understood in the context of the history of the actual political assertions of the people.

Whether the interpretation advanced here is entirely correct, the aim has been to push toward a necessary reorientation begun by other historians but not yet nearly completed. Who is the political actor in South Africa's history? At the beginning of the nineteenth century, European South Africans still commanded only a beachhead or two on the ancient African southern sub-continent. Who should be the South African political "we," if not the actual inhabitants of the country, the ancestors of black and brown complected people who constitute the greatest part of its citizenry today? What then can be recovered of their political praxis?

BORDERLANDS

Below we approach the highveld from the Cape's flat stretches and bands of hilltops, drifting up to it in the early 1800s, in a reconsideration of key texts generated at the interface of important early encounters. We might begin however by placing all southern Africa in its widest context. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were tumultuous times. People threw off their anciens régimes, rallied in the streets, raised up dictators, enslaved foreigners, and industrialized their cities. The Cape of Good Hope was a part of this world, standing astride global commerce east and west, hosting the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the English in its harbors, changing hands thrice because of the Napoleonic Wars.

The European Cape settlement lay at the margins of the lives of most South Africans. For continental Europeans, similarly, South Africa was the

² For this chapter and [Chapter 3](#), I draw on books and papers of many missionaries and some travelers, including William C. Willoughby, E. W. Smith, Roger Price, John Mackenzie, Eugene Casalis, Prosper Lemue, John Edwards, Samuel Rolland, D. F. Ellenberger, Andrew Smith, William Shaw, Thomas Arbousset, Robert Hully, W. J. Burchell, John Shrewsbury, James Stuart, William Colenso, Daniel Lindley, Henry Callaway and others, and especially on John Campbell, Samuel Broadbent, T. L. Hodgson, Anne Hodgson, Robert Moffat, James Archbell, and John Cameron. Citations to these and other primary sources have been minimized but of course not eliminated.

³ Elize S. van Eeden, "The Role of History with Regard to Evidence in Land Claims as Officially Proposed: A Case Study on the Farm Deelkraal IQ 142, North West Province," *South African Historical Journal*, 57 (2007), 179–200. The "baHuruthse" [*sic*] is mistakenly given by the otherwise astute author (in text and note, p. 184).

“antipodes,” the “austral” sphere, a place of wilderness. The Cape’s privileged class was, especially in its subordination of laborers, what David Hume was talking about when he condemned “useless luxury.” Dutch settlers bound families of indigenous people to their estates, and long after 1800, Cape Town remained an outpost from the previous century. Many of the Colony’s people lived in desperate circumstances. Captive women had to suffer drunken sailors demanding satisfaction in their own quarters, the slave lodge, a building set at the very center of official colonial Cape Town – its heart. Some of the servants of this evolving racial order got away and survived as well as they could: the so-called Hanglips were the first of many such maroon communities.⁴

Approaching the nineteenth century, these castoffs, together with the Cape herders often called Khoikhoi, created a widening zone of negotiation and force. In it men hunted elephant ivory and ostrich feathers, bartered, raided for slaves, pillaged, hustled beads, gunpowder and tobacco, and defended their families. Americanist historians have introduced the word “borderlands” to signal this kind of region. A borderlands, unlike a line or a front, as in “frontier,” suggests a space governed by interactive, overlapping, and incomplete authorities.⁵ In the borderlands, wildlife dwindled, trade thrived, and customs were violated and renewed. Such a domain grew north and east of Cape Town, toward the Fish and Kei Rivers, over the Karoo, up toward the Orange River, and pressed at the base of highveld farmers’ settlements.

⁴ David Hume, “Of Luxury,” retitled “Of Refinement in the Arts,” *Political Discourses* (London: 1752); on the Cape’s in-between-ness: Gavin Lucas, *An Archaeology of Colonial Identity: Power and Material Culture in the Dwaars Valley, South Africa* (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum, 2004); prostitution in the culture of Cape Town: Robert Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750–1870: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 127–8; prostitution is missing from the excellent *Cape Town, the Making of a City, an Illustrated Social History* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1998), ed. by Nigel Worden, Elizabeth van Heyningen, and Vivian Bickford-Smith; for the Hanglips; Robert Ross, *Cape of Torments: Slavery and Resistance in South Africa* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), 54 ff.; and Gerald Groenewald, “A Mother Makes No Bastard”: Family Law, Sexual Relations and Illegitimacy in Dutch Colonial Cape Town, c. 1652–1795,” *African Historical Review*, 39, 2 (2007), 67.

⁵ Patricia Limerick, *Something in the Soil: Legacies and Reckonings in the New West* (New York: Norton, 2001); Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997); Richard White, “It’s Your Misfortune and None of My Own”: *A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993); Jay Gitlin, “Becoming West: Toward a New Meaning for Western History,” in William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin, eds., *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America’s Western Past* (New York: Norton, 1993), 3–29; and James F. Brooks, “Violence, Justice, and State Power in the New Mexican Borderlands, 1780–1880,” in Richard White and John M. Findlay, *Power and Place in the North American West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 23–60. An excellent use of “frontier”: see Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson, eds., *The Frontier in History: South Africa and the United States* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1981); the debate about the “frontier” as the key influence on Afrikaner outlook is related in Martin Legassick, “The Frontier Tradition in South African Historiography,” in Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore, eds., *Economy and Society in Preindustrial South Africa* (London: Longman, 1980), 44–79.

The European officials who first controlled Cape Town knew barely anything about any upcountry people. Governor Jan van Riebeeck in his diary in 1661 spoke of “Brickje,” a term supplied to him by Khoikhoi who traded and grazed up and down the Cape. The word remained in use through the eighteenth century. It meant “goat people” in its literal translation (*biri-qua*), but in view of the purely bovine ideal of the Cape (Penninsular and Gonaqua) Khoikhoi, goats probably only indicated the domain of arable farmers. Under the same rubric, *briqua* apparently meant not only highveld chiefdoms but also the ornamented, elaborate chiefships associated with seventeenth-century Zimbabwe-related sites.⁶ Essentially *briqua* were “populous settled farmers,” so far unseen.

The first pioneers from the Cape into the midst of these farmers were more of the European settlement’s escaped servants, joined by outlaws (*drosters*), European “transfrontiersman,” and last, self-proclaimed racial “bastards.” Here they will be termed “métis.” A man named Classe Kok was an early example of a métis pioneer, reaching inland Khoikhoi, “Giriguriqua” people. His surname, “cook,” tells us what he did in Cape Town and of his subservient status there. From 1713 on, Kok’s progeny grew in number, helping to constitute a major chiefly lineage on the southwestern highveld.⁷

Soon enough one found more and more métis men with Khoikhoi; they wore trousers and shirts, and they traveled armed. Many of them undoubtedly saw themselves as colonists rather than indigenes – even when they were forced by circumstance to put up Khoikhoi-style *werfs*, smoke their meat in the Khoe manner, and marry Khoikhoi wives.⁸ But they also had no desire to

⁶ Lichtenstein gives Beriqua and recognizes it as a Khoe term; Hinrich Lichtenstein, *The Foundation of the Cape [and] About the Bechuanas*, ed. and trans. Otto Spohr (Cape Town: Balkema, 1973 [originally published 1807]), 63 ff., and Christopher Saunders, “Early Knowledge of the Sotho: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Accounts of the Tswana,” *Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library*, 20 (1969), 60–70. In *Environment, Power, and Injustice: A South African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 246, Nancy Jacobs points out the naming *matsaroqua* but sees it as Lichtenstein’s. Zimbabwe-related: see Chapter 2.

⁷ Nigel Penn, *The Forgotten Frontier: Colonist and Khoisan on the Cape’s Northern Frontier* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006), and “The Orange River Frontier Zone, C. 1700–1805,” 21–109, in *Einiqualand: Studies of the Orange River Frontier* (Cape Town: Andrew Smith, 1995), 42–5 esp., and Timothy Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1996), 32–58.

⁸ The notion of métis as a core status rather than a marginal attribute draws on Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), and Jean Loupe Amselle, *Metisso Logics* (New York: Routledge, 1989); and Thomas Arbousset and Francois Daumas, *Narrative of an Exploratory Tour to the Northeast of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope ... In the Months of March, April and May, 1836*, trans. John Brown (Cape Town: Struik, 1968 [1846]), who compare South African “Bastaards” with South American “Métis.” As an obviously imposed term, a plural noun, and occasionally an adjective, métis is also suitably vague: herein it entails products of the Cape and highveld borderlands, Khoe-, Dutch, Portuguese, and sometimes Sechuana- (the parent of Sesotho and SePedi and Setswana today) speaking people, intermixed culturally and/or biologically, and *oorlamsch*, ex-slaves, “Korana,” “Half-Castes,” Bastards (*bastaard*), *Binnelanders*,

go to, or return to, the Colony. They knew they would have found life difficult there, scrambling to get by as “brown people” (laborers) if they were not simply jailed.

As the Cape Colony’s area of effective control crept north and east in the tracks of various métis and Khoe-speaking pioneers, and as more and more pastoralists and gatherer-hunters came under commandos’ attacks, more of these people also submitted to colonial magistracies. There were, it was known, *briqua* further upcountry, large and powerful chiefdoms, at or near 1,000 meters’ elevation or more. The largest agrarian chiefdoms just beyond the touch of the Cape Colony experienced violence in the eighteenth century, and for some of the turmoil, “the Korana” are held responsible.⁹ The term (*koranner* in its earliest contexts) indicated métis and Khoikhoi who raided for cattle, and in other usages all pastoralist people of the Orange River, some of them Nama-speaking. There was a leadership structure on the Orange, apparently comprising a “great” (or “right-hand”) side, and a “little” (or “left hand”) side. The great side was made of the comparative newcomers, herders who pushed up from the south in the 1740s and 1750s. The little side were those who were already on the Orange, reduced to secondary status. Eventually, Great and Little Korana would be understood as ethnic terms.

Heading northeast after the Cape herders and Korana were more métis people, and then, finally, the Dutch and other European Christians together with their métis kin. The Europeans nullified many prior dispensations. In the era of the Dutch East India Company’s uncontested control over the Cape, Classe Kok’s grandson, Adam, received an engraved cane from the Colony’s governor, recognizing the Kok “captaincy,” and the Koks pioneered a farm in the Pieketberg district in 1751. But after only twenty years, Adam had to abandon his land to European farmers, or *Boers*, to use the term of the day, who took it over as their own. It is no wonder that even the most reputable métis families (Kok, Pienaar, Goeyman, Links, Barends) wished to fend for themselves and avoided both the Dutch East India Company and other Cape Town authorities.¹⁰

The first available reports from a borderlands area often come to us decades after its emergence. The Orange River, first called the Gariep or Great River, became something like the Rio Grande in the southwestern United States, a

“respectable” and non-, and all others whose persons and dispositions reflected the borderlands. It does not always imply a European (or Asian, Malagasy, or any) admixture of blood.

⁹ Karel Schoeman, *The Griqua Captaincy of Philippolis, 1826–61* (Pretoria: Protea, 2002), 12–15; Nigel Penn, *The Forgotten Frontier*, 125–35, 167–9; Robert Ross, “The Changing Legal Position of the Khoisan in the Cape Colony,” *African Perspectives*, 5, 2 (1981), 67–87.

¹⁰ Cf. Mohammad Adhikari, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004); Tim Keegan traces “coloured” identity to this same era (*Colonial Origins*, 85), earlier than I would do, and see Ian Goldin, *Making Race: The Politics and Economics of Coloured Identity in South Africa* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1987) [written in 1972], 4.

gateway to the borderlands. Once métis people crossed to the north side of the Orange and pledged their fealty to a chief, they might survive and even prosper. Writing things down was not common, and our view, via real texts, usually opens up in the midst of ongoing processes. Nonetheless, from fairly early on, we have a few glimpses of the social forms that developed among people in the borderlands, and close to them.

* * * * *

WIKAR AND GORDON AND THE “TWIN COURTS”

Northeast of today’s town of Prieska, close to the Orange River, dwelt a town of men and women identifying themselves as “twin-court people.” This name, the apparent meaning of “Gyzikoa” and “Geissiqua,” was recorded in 1778, and still over forty years later, in 1823 (as “Gozakas” and “Goyakas”). After that, the twin-court people disappeared.¹¹

Hendrik J. Wikar and Robert Jacob Gordon wrote down their impressions of the twin-court people in 1778 and 1779, accounts that have been published. They found them to be something of a puzzle: they were not one thing but a mixture of many things. Colonel Gordon, shouting commands in “Caffre” – in other words, in the language of African farmers living to the east – and listening for responses, judged many of them to be conversant in a similar language.¹² Others among them appeared only to speak a Korana language, the kind with clicks. Their own village was a doublet: two side-by-side kraals or public courts. All of them (they said) were a kind of farmer (*briqua*), junior to another moiety to the north. They were at war with Khoe-speakers around them, whom they generally “resemble[d].”

At the time, the Dutch-speaking settlers had been sending armed parties to kill and intimidate pastoralists and gatherer-hunter people. The “commando” system, partly responsible to the Dutch East India Company running Cape Town and partly to its factious, aspirant burghers, led to further rebellions and redoubled campaigns. Commandos (the singular, “commando,” refers to a group) eventually extirpated, for instance, the entire population of Sneeuwberg Bushmen or San. The commandos came to entail fewer European farmers, fewer Boers, and more of their servants, “Hottentots” – mostly former Cape herders. The Cape garrison commander, Colonel Robert Gordon, traveled in the borderlands to tell still-independent pastoralists that no more of these commandos would attack them. Naturally he wished to discover fully responsible entities to so assure. The twin-court people, however, disappointing

¹¹ School of Oriental and African Studies, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society archives (WMMS), Africa, In-Correspondence (here S.A. corr.), fiche 300, no. 28, Samuel Broadbent, Makwassie, June 8, 1823.

¹² Patrick Cullinan, *Robert Jacob Gordon, 1743–1795: The Man and His Travels at the Cape* (Cape Town: Struik Winchester, 1992), 96, III.

the colonel, were not an autonomous tribe. They were a minor partner in a hierarchical alliance with another entity.¹³

Right and left, great and little: the “senior twin” north of the Orange that was partnered with the twin-court people (*gyzekoa*) has never been precisely identified. Wikar and Gordon were keenly interested in them. Whoever they were, the two travelers thought, it would be they – the “true” African people, the multitudes, the farmers they had heard about – who deserved their ultimate attention. They too might be “reassured” and treated with. As the guide, Klaas Barends, told them, upcountry land was full of such farmers (*briqua*), “strapping” brown men with blackish-brown hair, “like the Madagascan slave.” The hodgepodge of slightly built people on the middle Orange contrasted with this imagined type. Then four solid men, “well-built,” came visiting from the north in 1779 looking for barter, and disconcertingly identified themselves as “Bushmen.” If physique and coloration were not reliable indicators of identity, one turned to material culture. The “true *briqua*” (Gordon heard it said) crafted the best household items, had the most beads and metal goods – they were the “clever” ones.¹⁴ Most of all, Gordon felt, the *briqua* were ... tobacco smokers.

All South Africa craved tobacco, such that “Tabee!” (“May I have some tobacco?”) meant “Good morning” in Cape Town. Highveld people had been growing and smoking and chewing and curing the American leaf for several generations. Gordon thought that they showed an especial affinity for it. In particular, deeply inhaling tobacco smoke – lying face-down in the dirt, over an opening to a clay tunnel, and falling into a stupor – he felt, typified them: it was the *briqua* way. Since then, however, the very same style of smoking has become known as the San or Bushman trademark for smoking cannabis.¹⁵

More helpfully, Gordon discovered that the upland farmers among themselves referred to each other as “Bitjoana.” This was, he intuited, the proper

¹³ Penn, *Forgotten Frontier*, 108, 132, 162–4; see also Nancy Jacobs, “Environment, Production and Social Difference in the Kalahari Thornveld, ca. 1750–1830,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 25, 3 (September 1999), 347–73; Gary Okihiro, “Precolonial Economic Change among the Tlhaping, c. 1795–1817,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 17, 1 (1984), 64 (59–79); and L. F. Maingard, “The Brikwa and the Ethnic Origin of the BaTlhaping,” *South African Journal of Science* (1933), 597. The assumption that all the medium-sized eighteenth-century chiefdoms in South Africa are “known” is unfounded.

¹⁴ E. E. Mossop, ed., *The Journals of Hendrik Jacob Wikar* (Cape Town: Balkema, 1935), 142, and n124; 147, 149–54; Cullinan, *Gordon*, 111–112 (October 28, 1779); John Barrow, *An Account of Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa, in the Years 1797 and 1798* (London: For T. Cadell Jun and W. Davies, 1801, 1804), 2 vols. (Vol. 2: 55–57); and Petrus B. Borchers, *An Autobiographical Memoir* (Cape Town: A. S. Robinson, 1861). Gordon talks of “Cabeticoe who call themselves Brroeniana or Morroena” and who “live across the [Orange] River.” “Cabeticoe” may be a misunderstanding of “my name is –” (*k’a biditswe* –).

¹⁵ Brian du Toit, “Man and Cannabis in Africa: A Study of Diffusion,” *African Economic History*, 1 (1976), 17–35; David Gordon, “From Rituals of Rapture to Dependence: The Political Economy of Khoikhoi Narcotic Consumption, c. 1487–1870,” *South African Historical Journal*, 35 (1996), 34–49; Worden et al., eds., *The Making of a City*, Vol. 1, p. 25.

tribal name. Little more was communicated, as his interlocutors, who had been in the borderlands for many decades, naturally sought to limit the flow of information to Colonel Gordon. Neither Gordon nor Wikar understood much of what was said to them in any case. Gordon wrote “Moetjoanas” and “Bitjoana,” apparently unaware that the second was the plural of the first. As a sole example of highveld farmers’ speech, he supplied, “Masepa Moetjoana Incosi,” which is either a version of the saying, “The chief is a shoulder-bag of manure” – that is, he is as useful as he is made to be – or an indication of the supremacy of Masepa, an ancient highveld ancestor. Among the “tribes” the local people mentioned, Wikar and Gordon listed “Barolo, the Shouarriba Capii, the Bapouru Boucana”: likely *barolong*, perhaps Shona-something, and conceivably Phalaborwa, an old highveld metals center.¹⁶ Belying the supposed centrality of Bitjoana, Petrus Borchers, traveling years later, when the town of Dithakong had become known, wrote “Barrowlows” (i.e., Barolo above, *barolong*) as the parent designation for highveld farmers, not Bitjoana or any of its variants.¹⁷

Other viable political subsystems across the southern highveld are detectable in the margins of observers’ notes. A chiefdom called *tlharo* appears in the historical record as *matsaroqua*, “people of *tlaro*,” where *ma-* is prefixed to *Tlaro*, probably a chief’s name, in the Bantu-language-family manner; but *qua* is also used, a Khoe-language (Khoikhoi) suffix for “people.”¹⁸ Varieties of belonging did not register as on a four-color map. On the highveld north of the Marico, as far away as Nata, Bushmen (*masarwa*: cf. *morwa* above), who were Khoe- (not San-) speaking, were retained by chiefs and top counselors as cattle-post servants. On the Orange River there were numerous impoverished Bantu-speaking men and women, whose households herded cattle for Korana, and they were verbally abused as “Bushmen.” There is also mention of “farm Bootschuanas,” distinguished from people who depended more on cattle.¹⁹ Were these “ethnic groups”? What would it mean to say so? Further north, Samuel Broadbent and Thomas Hodgson wrote in 1822 of “Moroas” – probably *morwa* (singular) and *barwa* (plural), *-rwa* connoting autochthones – a “people” they said were “scattered in villages all over the country.” The Moroas spoke the same language as other highveld dwellers and were

¹⁶ Cf. Matshipi, of iron, and “Masepie,” re Chapter 2. For Phalaborwa, the classic intervention is Nikolas van der Merwe and Robert Scully, “The Phalaborwa Story: Archaeological and Ethnographic Investigation of a South African Iron Age Group,” *World Archaeology* 3, 2 (1971), 178–96, although “BaPhalaborwa” are unnecessarily imagined as a “tribe.”

¹⁷ Borchers, *An Autobiographical Memoir*, 123.

¹⁸ Lichtenstein, cited by Jacobs, *Environment*, 246, n21; cf. John William Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa 1822–24* (New York: Johnson Reprint, 1967, 2 vols.), Vol. 2, 375–6, “Bamuchars and Mokarraquas.”

¹⁹ Edwin Wilmsen, *Land Filled with Flies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), in a series of sometimes acrimonious debates in the 1990s in *American Anthropologist* with Richard Lee and others, suggested a theory of the marginalization of Bushmen.

quite wealthy with their own vast herds of sheep and cattle.²⁰ And who were the quite separate “Bootschuana Bushmen”? Their men wielded assegais in raids; they were counted as “part of the Bootschuana nation,” and they built highveld-style houses, complete with hedges and adjacent gardens. In the famine of 1823, métis men thought it wise to petition them for Indian corn, as if they were seen as particularly resourceful.²¹

By the time the borderlands closed and administrative control of the land had been secured, many of these unequal relationships and networks were gone. In the later nineteenth century there would be few high-status Bushmen farmers out on the land, or at least, it would no longer make sense to say so. The ordinary way to depict the highveld soon settled into a simple tripartite framework: there were the Natives, the Bantu-speakers; the Hottentots, wild or laboring Khoe-speakers; and the Bushmen, destitute or dangerous, most useful for dissections in European anatomy classes.

JOURNEY TO DITHAKONG: MISSIONARIES, MÉTIS, AND BECHUANA NORTH OF THE ORANGE (“GREAT”) RIVER

One constant on the highveld, apparently, was the term “Bitjuana,” or, as it was often written, “Bootschuana,” “Becwana,” “Booshuanna,” before being standardized as “Bechuana.” What did this word mean? It most likely began as they, or we, being “blended together,” or “all mixed,” or “similar.” Being *tswana* or *tshwana*²² was appropriate for territories abutting a diverse borderlands, with their constant dangers and opportunities. Highveld farming people

²⁰ WMMS, S.A. corr., fiche 300, no. 30/29, including Broadbent, extract from his journal in his hand, October 29, 1823; and John Campbell, *Travels in South Africa Undertaken at the Request of the London Missionary Society, Being a Second Journey into the Interior of That Country* (London: LMS/Francis Wesley, 1822), Vol. 1, 197–8. Cf. Thilo Schadenberg, “Batwa, the Bantu name for the invisible people,” in Karen Biesrbouck, Stefan Elders, and Gerda Rossel, eds., *Challenging Elusiveness: Central African Hunter-Gatherers in a Multi-Disciplinary Perspective* (Leiden: CNWS Publications, 1999), 21–39; Nancy Jacobs, “Environment,” 367, on castes; these people perhaps spoke a language later grouped with (Se)Kgalagadi.

²¹ South African Library (SAL), MSC 39/13 Bks. 7 to 12, Thomas Hodson notebook journals, “January 1823,” “September 1823.” And St. Paul’s Church, Thaba Nchu, Baptismal Registers (1840s); farm Bootchuanas: WMMS, S.A. corr., Samuel Broadbent, postmarked August 23, 1823, refers to mid June, 1823.

²² Moetjoana and Bitjoana (and Bechuana, soon the common spelling) suggest the conjoining of some lost initial vowel; there are many instances in aspirated form (Bechuana, Bootschuana, Beetshuanna), but never Batshwana. All have the reciprocal *-ana*. “Similar” is simply most likely and “from one another,” “made to copy each other,” etc., are also plausible. See Steven Volz, “European Missionaries and Tswana Identity in the 19th Century,” *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies*, 17, 1 (2003), 6, citing Lichtenstein; and John Barrow, *Voyage to Cochinchina, including an Account of a Journey to the Booshuanas* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1807), based on Truter’s manuscript which I have not seen, gives “Booshuanas” and differentiates them from Barroloos (*barolong*), p. 404; Somerville offers Bootshooanas or Mootshooanas, Frank and Edna Bradlow, eds., *William Somerville’s Narrative of His Journeys to the Eastern Cape Frontier and the Lattakoe, 1799 to 1802* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1979), 122.

were similar; it was most likely the mundane phrase, “yes, we are similar” or “the same” (*tshwana*) said to African travelers and Europeans, about themselves and nearby others, that produced what Broadbent called “the Sichuaan” and John William Burchell “the Sichuana language.” That language, wrote Burchell, “being common to all these different tribes, seems to unite them into one great nation; and a change of rulers therefore is, to them, little more than a change of persons.” For Broadbent this “same language,” which he took as an unknown species of Arabic, was spoken in mountain and valley alike.²³ He and John Campbell similarly felt “that language” was used up to the equator and across to “the Indian Ocean.” In defining “Beetjuanas,” the botanist Lichtenstein said, “All these tribes [who] speak the *same* language, and their modes of life, customs, and manners, vary little from each other, as to the most essential points.”²⁴ Burchell said, “These nations or tribes, as far as we are yet acquainted with them, pursue generally the *same* mode of life.” These phrases would be *se se tshwana le* if there were a grammatical object and *se se tshwaneng* if there were not. The suffix “ana” (in *ts[h]wana*) conveys reciprocal action. John Philip, the leading South African representative of the humanitarian Christian lobby, agreed that the sameness (*sets[h]wana*) covered a huge area, perhaps “a vast portion of the continent.”²⁵

The Bechuana as a whole were rarely termed a tribe, yet foreign observers increasingly spoke of tribes among them. What did they mean by tribes? Within the larger mixture or similarity, *tshwana*, on the highveld, there were chiefdoms and village associations, some that persisted for more than a lifetime, and these were ordinarily called tribes. Especially those who circumcised their youths together, imprinted a recognizable culture among their elites and created a pattern of belonging for their citizens to emulate. Cultural or regional

²³ Differing with Lye and Murray’s view that Sotho meant “south” or “black people,” a small part of their pioneering and excellent *Transformations on the Highveld: The Tswana and Southern Sotho* (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble Books, 1980).

²⁴ Campbell: Council for World Mission, London Missionary Society (LMS), South Africa, incoming correspondence (S.A. corr.), 8/3A Campbell, September 5, 1821, “Cities of Mashowe and Kurraechane,” and see John Campbell, *Travels in South Africa. Undertaken at the request of the Missionary Society* (London: Flagg and Gould, 1816), Vol. 1, 181; Burchell (*Travels in the Interior*, Vol. 2), knew *ba* was the prefix for “people,” but nonetheless submitted Bichuana, e.g., pp. 249–50. The Philip, Burchell, and part of the Lichtenstein quotes, Hinrick Lichtenstein, *Travels in South Africa in the Years 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806*, trans. Anne Plumtre (2 vols.) (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1928–1930 [originally published 1812–15], Vol. 2 (London: Henry Colburn, 1815), 409, appear in Steven Volz, “European Missionaries and Tswana Identity,” but not this argument. Similarly, see Jean and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, Vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 387.

²⁵ Lichtenstein says, in *Foundation of the Cape* [and] *About the Bechuanas*, 63 ff., that Hendrik Hop (1716–71) in his diary of 1761 referred to “Butshuanas,” perhaps the earliest use on record but unconfirmed. Hop is apparently reprinted by the van Riebeeck society as publication number 28 of 1947: “Journal eines Landzuges church das Land der Kleinen und grossen Namaquas ... Unter Anführung du Hauptmanns Heinrich Hop ...” in C. T. Brink, ed., *Neue Kurzgefasste Beschreibung des Vorgebirges der Guten Hoffnung* (Leipzig: Weynance, 1777 [reprint: 1947]), which I have not seen.

differences were almost always expressed as, “people of N_____” do things this way, “people of P_____” that way, where N_____ and P_____ were in most cases ancestral chiefs (e.g., Netanye and Patika), just like “Masepa” above. Chiefship itself was an incorporative institution, and its success lay in bridging differences among varied constituencies. The word for the landed polity, residentially (*morafe*), meant everyone in the big meeting (*pitso*), everyone living together, not all blood-relations.²⁶

A period of turmoil engulfed people north of the Orange River from the mid-1810s. Until recently this was called by all South Africanist historians “the *Mfecane*,” or more specifically to the experience of the highveld, “the *Difaqane*.” There are several reasons for getting rid of these terms, some first advanced in Julian Cobbing’s work. Such special terms suggest a purely indigenous process – and one of tribal violence – when in fact by 1800 the borderlands hosted an increasing level of *métissage*, slaving, and heightened interest in trade. On the eve of the transference of the Cape to British authority, well before the *Difaqane* period, we catch a brief glimpse of life in its partial regularities and witness this wider involvement. In Dithakong, chief Molehabangwe’s chiefship called itself and its legions “people of the place of the fish,” or *batlhaping*. From 1801 to 1806, two missionaries, one European and one métis, lived and preached in the place-of-fish vicinity.²⁷ According to Petrus Borchers, who was in Dithakong in 1801 with a Cape government expedition, even by that year, people knew to shout “Good day, good day, sir!” in Dutch (“Goeddag, goeddag, heeren”) as he strolled through the town. The botanist William Burchell a few years later in the same place noticed that the ubiquitous greeting had become “Monare!” – surely a simple corruption of *myneer* (“mister”).²⁸ Cultural and commercial hybridities preceded European engagement.

²⁶ “Chief,” CS 1101 in Malcolm Guthrie, *Comparative Bantu*, 4 vols. (Farnham: Farnborough, Gregg, 1967–70; Vol. 2: 1971); Vol. 2 is **kóci*, the * denoting a hypothesized root form. It is the same form as CS 1102, “lion.” The two ideas (CS 1102 and 1101) are represented as **kóci* but not in the same areas (J. Vansina, personal communication, July 14, 2006). See also CS 1265 for Guthrie’s notion of a grouping of terms for chief; finally, see the penetrating David Hammond-Tooke, “Descent Groups, Chiefdoms and South African Historiography,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 11, 2 (April 1985), 305–19, for his seminal critique of historians’ taking of lineages for entities.

²⁷ William Edwards and Jan Kok (no direct relation of Adam Kok, says Karel Schoeman), Karel Schoeman, ed., *The Mission at Griquatown, 1801–1821* (Griquatown: Griqua Toerisme Veren., 1997), 30; and Nigel Penn, “Orange River Frontier Zone,” 36–7; Gerald O. West, “Early Encounters with the Bible among the Batlhaping: Historical and Hermeneutical Signs,” *Biblical Interpretation*, 12, 3 (2004), 251–81. Readers of Afrikaans may see Johannes T. du Bruyn, “Die Tlhaping En Die Earste Sendelinge, 1801–1806,” *South African Historical Journal*, 14 (1982), 8–34, and du Bruyn, *Die Aanvangsjare Van Dir Chriselike Sending Onder Die Tlhaping, 1800–1825* (Pretoria: Die Staatsdrukker, 1989); and J. J. Schoeman, *Kichener en di vroeë sending, 1799–1806* (Cape Town: S. A. Library, 1996); cf. Jacobs, *Environment*, 33 ff.

²⁸ From Burchell came perhaps the first exposure of highveld chiefs to the Gospel. Burchell, *Travels in the Interior*, Vol. 1, July 19, 1812, 427 ff.; and below.

In 1812, Molehabangwe's son Mothibe attained the chiefship in Dithakong, and Burchell was there to witness his early rule. In his diary entry for July 24, Burchell assessed the cosmopolitan political situation in town, again, well before any Mfecane or Difaqane upsurge of attacks. He noted "the arrival of Berends the Hottentot Captain," having with him Jan Hendricks (of Klaarwater), and "fourteen others" with their families, also from the Cape Colony. They moved to "Serrakutu's Mootsi" (*motse*, village or ward), just outside the main settlements at Dithakong.²⁹ The métis, Dutch-speaking preacher, Hendricks, stayed on and preached every Sunday to a Christian congregation. The town was a multilingual place: many women would have spoken *Xiri*, including Mothibe's mother; everyone spoke the Bantu language of the highveld, *Sechuana* (see above), including the missionaries and frontiersmen; and some of them spoke at least a bit of Dutch, too.

South of Dithakong, the métis character of the southern highveld was growing even more pronounced. Thus on the highveld a Korana leader, Taaibosch (Bushman), might become the chief of a group of "Matsatedi," armed and mounted "bastards" (the word from which *matsatedi* was derived); a self-described Bushman native evangelist, with the name Andries Pretorius, accumulated a following and became a chief; and a métis leader, Cornelius Kok, could retire to his family farm and homestead, living as a veritable "Boer."³⁰ These people trafficked with and among chiefdoms; the ivory trade in particular brought many of them onto the highveld and linked them in "mateships" to individual Bantu-speaking farmers. From the other side, the trade in metals bound chiefdoms to networks with routes up and over the Save (Sabe) River and across the Limpopo's malarial valleys to the Zimbabwean plateau and to other paths leading even farther afield. All across the Cape and trans-Orangia, from the Namibian border to the Maluti mountains, highveld dwellers conducted commerce with outsiders, looking tolerantly on *métissage*, and esteeming the potential value of foreigners.

The early Protestant missionaries to these places found themselves with great latitude and an initial store of goodwill. Some of them came to wield influence over vast domains, even while they made few tested converts; similar situations arose in West Africa, South Asia, and the Pacific. These men ruled their programs with an iron hand and brooked no dissent from the home office. Starting in the 1800s, Johannes van der Kemp, the first London Missionary Society representative to Khoe-speakers, controlled the whole field from his Bethelsdorp mission. Assisted by James Read, he emitted a stream of antislavery rhetoric, sometimes directed toward slave-owning

²⁹ Schoeman, *Mission at Griquatown*, 17–19.

³⁰ Schoeman, *The Griqua Captaincy*, 110; Martin Legassick, "The Northern Frontier to c. 1840: The Rise and Decline of the Griqua People," in Richard Elphick and Hermann Giliomee, eds., *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652 to 1840* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1989); Martin Legassick, "The Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana, and the Missionaries, 1789 to 1840: The Politics of a Frontier Zone," Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, History, 1969, is invaluable and is used severally herein.

“Christian” settlers themselves.³¹ Perhaps surprisingly, the early men blended in culturally very well with herding and farming folk, much better than their Victorian replacements would. Van der Kemp dressed simply and married a teenaged former slave; Read married a Khoikhoi woman, and both men deprecated Western materialism.

Gradually, however, as Dissenting Christianity expanded its reach in Britain, touching the needs of the employer as well as the worker, the missionary societies became more cautious.³² After Van der Kemp died, Cape Town’s growing middle class stimulated the Society to dispatch the first guide and enforcer to South Africa’s Christianizing highveld. In 1813 and again after that, the Reverend John Campbell traveled about – this was later called “itinerating” – to give shape to the London Missionary Society’s future work. Essentially his aim was to vet potentially new expressions of Christian fraternity, to condition them and put them under harness. His published and unpublished writings are therefore invaluable for reconstructing highveld history in his time.

Encountering the small métis settlement called Klaarwater, Campbell’s most important project was to convince the Christian leaders there to label themselves “Griquas.” Campbell probably based *griqua* as a word-sound on “Giriguriqua,” one spelling among several (*/karihuri [qua]* is another) for the Khoikhoi polity recognized for having hosted the first progenitor of the Koks. After taking this made-up name, Griqua, often given as “Grikwas,” they were to fall under the aegis of the London Missionary Society, creating a sphere of influence only a half-step away from colonial rule.³³ Announcing the overlap between church and state, the nine “magistrates” of “Griquatown,” as Klaarwater became, included five men who were also elected to the diaconate of the nascent Christian church. Hendricks, still preaching at Dithakong, was one of them. Another was Andries Waterboer, soon a major chief and highveld power in his own right.

The London Missionary Society positioned its authority therein carefully, mediating the incorporation of people into the colonial world and promoting interim solutions under its subtle purlieu. Collectively the Griqua numbered only 2,000 to 3,000 people. Campbell and a colleague, William Anderson, strove to keep them just outside the reach of colonial levies and conscriptions, as no one would have cooperated otherwise. Campbell attached a rough constitution to Griquatown for its self-governance with this same aim. Hundreds of non-European households had already been pushed aside, and Griqua was a contrary effort. The name Griqua thus made an entity out of the intersection

³¹ See Elizabeth Elbourne and Robert Ross, “Combating Spiritual and Social Bondage: Early Mission in the Cape Colony,” in Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport, eds., *Christianity in South Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), esp. 39 (31–50); and Roger Beck, “Monarchs and Missionaries among the Tswana and Sotho,” 107–20, in same.

³² Broadly corresponding to the process described by E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1966).

³³ Legassick, “The Griqua,” esp. 202 ff.; contextually, see Andrew Porter, “Church History, History of Christianity, Religious History: Some Reflections on British Missionary Enterprise since the Late Eighteenth Century,” *Church History*, 71, 3 (September 2002), 555–84.

of Christian identification, colonial engagement, and resistance to direct subordination. Campbell's action was paradigmatic, possibly influenced by the American example and the general penetration of "nation" into elite discourse; but soon enough the missionaries thought of "the Griquas" as having always been there, "part of the mass of barbarism which [they] ... found wandering about in a savage state." Their observations conformed to the stock description of "Hottentots," who went about, according to missionaries, before Christianity redefined them, with "bodies daubed with red paint, their heads loaded with grease and shiny powder."³⁴

In a more tangible sense, the critical distinction between people on the ground was spatial, not corporeal. Difference was expressed in the shape of their settlements, not the ethnic composition of their inhabitants. The towns of Dithakong, Khunwane, Kaditshwene, Thabeng, Shoshong, Manganeng, and others were laid out in the highveld manner, surrounded by arable lands and pastures. They contrasted with Griquatown (formerly Klaarwater), Campbell, and Philippolis, with their rectangular gardens and plots. Both kinds of town inducted streams of Khoe- and San-speaking and métis people into their lineages and neighborhoods. In them Bantu-speaking farmers and herders and foreigners mixed with one another, just as they had in the past, well before the Difaqane period.

Campbell's and Anderson's 1813 party traveled from Griquatown to Mothibe's town, the settlement at Dithakong, with several South African preachers and métis deacons, and various Koks and Barends, preachers and chiefs, and servants, in five wagons.³⁵ Upon entering the people-of-the-place-of-fish's main court (*kgotla*), they spoke to chiefly counselors, and the conversation quickly turned to the subject of ancestors and ancestry. The missionaries announced their claim to serve the highest ancestor of all. Campbell might have noticed someone's penis, because he asked about the practice of circumcision. The old men in the court defended circumcision as having come from their ancestors, from "father to son," as Monnametse ("Waterman"), an uncle of the chief, phrased it. The missionaries laid claim to the domain of this transfer, the time or state of being (*bogologolo*) called "long ago," or alternatively, "great-great-ness." Displaying their Bible, the missionaries said through interpreters that circumcision was the practice of Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, and Jacob. They knew its "true meaning," which was an inner affiliation, and they advised against its outer expression.

³⁴ John Philip, *Researches in South Africa* (London: J. Duncan, 1828), Vol. 1, 56, cited by Schoeman, *Mission at Griquatown*, 17, for the first quote; and Council for World Mission, London Missionary Society (LMS), John Philip Papers, Box 14, Fl. 1, Jacket A, J. Melvill, Griquatown, November 9, 1832, referring to Lammert Jansz, William Anderson, and Heinrich Helm's missionary work, referenced in J. A. Heese, *South African Genealogies*, ed. R. T. Lombard (Pretoria: HSRC, 1986–92).

³⁵ LMS, S.A. corr., 5/2/D, Campbell, Klaarwater, July 16, 1813. Anderson b. 1769, d. 1852, settled Klaarwater (later Griquatown) in 1804.

In response, Monnametse's men forced the missionaries to recite the father-son succession of kings several times. "Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac," the missionaries said, speaking the names of the fathers who initiated circumcision, and perhaps Ephraim, Reuben, and Asher, too. Each listener sitting on his carved stool learned the names, "looking to us for correction, if they pronounced any of them wrong." Campbell had come hoping to use the words chief and ancestor (*kgosi* and *modimo*) to indicate God, and ended up presenting his people's "kings" genealogy instead.

Mmahutu, Mothibe's wife, who like Monnametse admired reading and writing from afar, tried to make sense of these dialogues, to bracket the missionaries' challenging statements into coherence. "Will people who are dead rise up again?" she asked. "Is he," the figure they so highly praised, ancestor, "under the earth, or where is he?"³⁶ The first question was about the millennium, which both Methodists and Congregationalists preached about. Missionaries often said the world was about to end in fire. The second question asked about location: was whoever they spoke of buried like the other dead, staying underground for the time being?³⁷

Fresh from their initial success in turning mixture into Griquaness, the missionaries persisted, and convinced Mothibe to accept some kind of Christian presence, in this revealing manner. The Reverend Anderson jotted down, and then read aloud, the names of Mothibe's forefathers, in reverse order of rule, from Mothibe backward, reciting what he called Mothibe's "predecessors in government." Mirroring the command performance by Campbell's party in pronouncing Abraham, Ishmael, and Isaac, Anderson now supplied Mothibe's father's dynasty as a kindred holy charter, just as knowable, just as preservable. Indeed the names of the men mentioned referred to the earliest times (*bogologolo*), the same great-great times as the era of the Bible stories, the times of the "ancestor" ("Ancestor") that Anderson and the others said was the father of everyone present. The genealogy, made into a durable substance, was an effective public endorsement of Mothibe's chiefship. In his response, Mothibe positioned the missionaries just below him in this single chain of paternity: "Let the missionaries come. I will be a father to them."³⁸

Chief Cornelius Kok brought his following from Kamiesberg to Griquatown substantially by 1816, before he retired. The Reverend James Read arrived from Griquatown to Dithakong in that year with a Kok escort. He found his efforts were discouraged. The chief complained to him that "the very day they give their consent to receive the gospel they that moment must give up their political authority" as well as their modes of dress and culture: this was

³⁶ Ibid., Campbell July 27, 1813. Verbatim except "Is God under the earth," is in ms. rather than "is he," which in my retranslation stands for "Is A/ancestor" (*a modimo* ...) as was the likely original.

³⁷ I.e., WMMS, S.A. corr., fiche 300, no. 29, Broadbent, "Extract from journals," June 8, 1823; "Have you seen him?," Missionaries' Papers, Box 600, Broadbent, "Reminiscences," ms. notebook, "Part Second," 114.

³⁸ LMS, S.A. corr., 5/2/D, Campbell, July 27, 1813.

how the evangelical idea was perceived by them. Again one rainy evening in midsummer, 1817, Adam Kok parked Christians' wagons in Dithakong's court and importuned Mothibe to embrace the mission. Jan Hendricks had already been preaching as had other métis Read had baptized on the Orange. Kok pushed hard to establish a genuine Christian métis foothold in town and finally Mothibe agreed. "How could I refuse," Mothibe said to Kok, "what has come through the intentions of your father [Cornelius Kok]?"³⁹

Again and again the subject of fathers and ancestors arose, a discourse of *ancestry*, spoken in circumstances where men made decisions about their power and the future. The missionaries tried to shape this discourse by saying "father" as if he were present and powerful. This could backfire; the Reverend Read soon discovered that when he felt he was preaching about "God," the congregation misunderstood him to be talking about himself, his own authority and sacrifice. And so Read resigned from active preaching, leaving that to Hendricks and other métis.

Further usages corresponding to this newly claimed authority then proliferated. A woman at Dithakong claimed, in 1822, to speak with *modimo* every day, secretly, and to charge people a fee for her help. Who was her interlocutor? Did this word mean "an ancestor" or "the ancestor"? Without the definite article existing in Sechuana speech, how can one say?⁴⁰ Similarly, it does not make sense to quibble over ancestor or Ancestor, spelled with a capital A, since highveld society was not literate. We must look solely at spoken usage. A chief praised Mothibe for having "ancestor" in Dithakong; didn't the missionaries deliver their might with their presence? Soon Mothibe began intervening in Hendricks's church-house discourse about the great ancestor. "The chief is in constant attendance, he understands the corana [Korana] language and has offered to assist to interpret," Read was told. To be sure.⁴¹

In the midst of this uncertain and ambiguous marking-out of power, the Griqua tied to Campbell and Anderson suffered a major blow, undercutting their chosen identity. After announcing the formation of the Griqua nation, Anderson had to communicate to them that their men and boys were nonetheless to be conscripted for the Colony, as they had feared – for the Cape Hottentot Regiment. Twenty young men were needed at once. The insult

³⁹ LMS, S.A. corr., 6/3/C, Robert Hamilton, Griquatown, April 28, 1816, and 7/1/C, James Read, "Lattakoo" (Dithakong), March 15, 1817; and Fiche 75A, Robert Moffat, Vrede Berg, Greater Namaqua, August 20, 1818. Cupido Kakkerlak, Peter David, Cruisman (from Bethelsdorp), and Jan Hendrick, were all influential Christians; see "Extracts from Mr. Read's Journal of His Late Journey from Griqua Town to Lattakoo, and His Reception by King Mateebe," *Quarterly Chronicle of the Transactions of the London Missionary Society*, 1 (1815–19), 123–8.

⁴⁰ How different was the message of "frauds," such as the fugitive Pole, "Stephanus," in 1798? Peggy Brock, "New Christians as Evangelists," Chapter 7, in Norman Etherington, ed., *Missions and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 132–52.

⁴¹ LMS, S.A. corr., 7/1/C, Lattakoo (Dithakong), James Read, March 15, 1817. Comaroff and Comaroff, in *Of Revelation*, Vol. 1, tell the story of Mothibe and Read in two parts, 170–9, and 200–5.

spurred a minority of dissenters to arm themselves and take to the hills (as *hartenaars*). Some of them tried to kill Anderson; far greater numbers were sympathetic to the rebels. Griqua Christians stopped writing baptisms into their parish register, suspecting the names were being copied and sent to Cape Town to be used as a future conscription list. Anderson, getting away with his life, reacted by asking Andries Stockenström, the colonial executive in charge, to annex all the métis to the Colony, including the Griqua.

Refusing to play his part in such a betrayal, Stockenström instead recognized the Griqua as a protected people living outside the Colony's direct reach. They would remain apart, distinct from Cape "brown people," as from rebels and mountain men. This then is what was possible when Christianity was permitted to grow among South Africans who had something to gain: a Christian tribe might emerge and receive protection from its would-be masters.⁴²

ANCESTORS AS CHIEFS

In the borderlands, ancestors had great weight, and the word itself resounded in specific and charged situations.⁴³ What did "ancestor" really mean, there and farther upcountry? On the highveld, as in most of South Africa, the passage of successful *chiefs*, to *ancestors*, to *community self-identification*, to *oblivion* formed a kind of ideal cycle.⁴⁴ Ancestors lay powerfully at the center of political life; when it made sense to remember them, they were present, but when it made sense to forget about them, they faded away. At the center of every level of social and political organization was a court (*kgotla*), a flat and unadorned space with perhaps a cupola of shade offered by some rafters. The area where news was heard first and public discussion resounded, the town court was also the central place for penning cattle. Around it the chief arranged a right-hand side, senior, and a left (junior) side, although this arrangement was often reduced to notional space after a few generations.

⁴² LMS, John Philip Papers, Maynard to Anderson, January 3, 1814.

⁴³ See William Worger's compelling and alternative treatment, "Parsing God: Conversations about the Meaning of Words and Metaphors in Nineteenth Century Southern Africa," *Journal of African History*, 42, 3 (2001): 417–47.

⁴⁴ See Jan Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforests: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press), 95, 297; David Coplan, "Ningizimu: Anthropophagy and the Contest of Civilizations in South Africa," paper, December 4, 2002, University of Maryland; Guthrie, *Comp. Bantu*, 4 vols., Vol. 3: 168; and David Schoenbrun, *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu Culture: Vocabulary, Etymology, and Distribution* (Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 1997); Root 278, cited in Schoenbrun's "Conjuring the Modern in Africa: Durability and Rupture in Histories of Public Healing between the Great Lakes of East Africa," *American Historical Review*, 111, 5 (December 2006), 1403–39; W. C. Willoughby, *Soul of the Bantu: A Sympathetic Study of the Magico-Religious Practices and Beliefs of the Bantu Tribes of Africa* (New York: Doubleday, 1928); W. C. Willoughby, *Nature Worship and Taboo* (Hartford: Hartford Seminar Press, 1932), 110 ff., and Tom Brown, *Among the Bantu Nomads* (London: London Missionary Society, 1926).

Underneath the trodden manure and earth of the court lay the chief's ancestors, buried directly beneath his prized cattle. When the naturalist and spy Andrew Smith tried to learn about the names of the "tribes," the conversation turned at once to mortuary rights for this reason: the names he asked about were in fact dead chiefs, buried under his feet.

French Protestant missionaries in the 1830s recorded what they called "prayers," in which men addressed a recently deceased chief, as follows: "New ancestor, intercede with the old! Become the ancestor of my fathers!"⁴⁵ By such a formula, a "people of [dead chief] N_____" might shift to become "people of P_____" moving from one to the other. To make way for Patika (for instance), the essence of Netanye – the memory of a chief Netanye in its representation of a communal self – would "fade away" (*go dimelela*), as people took account of the new political reality on the ground.

What the Paris Evangelical missionaries themselves supply as a gloss for the "prayer" in the above example is different from my version (which is based on their vernacular transcription). They translate the word "molemo" (*moremo*, *modimo*), "ancestor," so as to give "New god, intercede for the old," and "God of my ancestors." The question arises then: were South African people already talking about gods or God, and not ancestor and ancestors? Were they referencing (the) single, universal God when they used this word *modimo*? Although some reputable scholars seem to think so, highveld people rejected the notion when they first encountered it among Europeans. "Every man had got his Moremo [i.e., *modimo* which is] his forefather not one Moremo," Sir Andrew Smith was patiently told.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Prosper Lemue, "Idees religieuses et coutumes de Bechuanas," *Journal des Missions Evangeliques de Paris*, 18 (1834), 473–9; and see C.-H. Perrot, *Les Sotho et les Missionnaires Europeens au XIXe Siecle* (Annales de l'Universite d'Abidjan, Series F, Vol. 2, pt. 1: 1970), and R. C. Germond, ed., *Chronicles of Basutoland: A Cunning Commentary ... 1830–1902, by the French Protestant Mission in South Africa* (Moriya: Morija Book Depot, 1967), 87, 98, 110–11; Hugh Ashton, *The Basuto: A Social Study of Traditional and Modern Lesotho* (Oxford: I.A.I., 1967); Eugene Casalis, *The Basutos, or Twenty-Three Years in South Africa* (Cape Town: Struik, 1965 [1889]); South African Museum Library (SAM-L), Andrew Smith, Andrew Smith Folios, Vol. 12, "Memoranda A", his unpublished notebooks. Separately, Leonard Thompson, *Survival in Two Worlds: Moshoeshoe of Lesotho, 1786–1870* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 103, citing Eugene Casalis, April 15, 1839, *Journal des Missions Evangeliques de Paris* 15 (1840), 2–3. Of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society men in the Caledon Valley, Isaac Bisseux, Prosper Lemue, and Samuel Rolland first arrived in 1829, and Thomas Arbousset, Eugene Casalis, and Constant Gosselin came in 1833.

⁴⁶ SAM-L, Andrew Smith folios, Vol. 12, "Memoranda A." See also Arbousset and Daumas, *Narrative of an Exploratory Tour ...* [1846], "a kind of worship to their ancestors, whom they call barimos, or in the singular morimo," 69, 305; in some situations, *medimo* seems to have become a variant plural; see Robert Moffat, *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa* (London: John Snow, 1842), 579, and Legassick, "Griqua," 459, and SAM-L, Smith, Folio A, "Tlhaping" and passim. For the eastern side of South Africa, see Worger, "Parsing God," 443, referencing Henry Callaway; and David Chidester, *Savage Systems: Colonialism and Comparative Religion in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 1996), agreeing most firmly on *unkulunkulu*.

There are further reasons for refusing the French missionaries' translation, and subsequent repetitions of it in other texts. The missionaries were directly inclined to strengthen their decision to use "Molemo" (*modimo*) to convey that He *is*, and what His characteristics were, with retrospective reasoning. Their decision remains to be investigated, but a priori no presumption of objectivity should be extended to their glosses. For above all, their translations *required* that God exists – and always existed – everywhere, even in nonmonotheistic worlds. That was the point. To what extent people could name Him or know Him remained to be hammered out, but once indicated in indigenous lexicons, He would ipso facto be forever found in the indigenous past.

We should look for meaning in people's actual usage. It seems that the word taken as "ancestor" and later "God" could, for example, also mean a *living* chief. When Andrew Smith asked people in the Mohokare, or Caledon, River Valley about "greatest" ancestor(s) in 1841, they told him, "[We] swear by Machush. Ca moshush. What is by Moshush." If Moshush (Moshoeshoe) was the greatest "ancestor," being an immensely and uniquely successful highveld state-builder, who does he "swear by"? He "swears by himself" or by "his own father, Ca [by] Mokachanee."⁴⁷ Smith's notes suggest these were reasonable responses. True, ancestors could also "be," for other, limited usages, cattle, snakes, or apparitions visible to gifted experts. "Son of Mokachane," said Tsapi, Chief Mosheshoe's primary public visionary and healer, "Your grandfather Peete and the mother of Letsie have appeared to me, I saw them this morning seated before my door."⁴⁸ Such reports of the uncanny were, however, unusual: they were bad omens, signs of missteps in living up to the agglomerative potential of putatively shared ancestry.

More than any spiritual presence of a past chief, the bodily presence of the actual chief represented ancestrally located unity. The living chief's relevance oscillated, advanced and fell back, with the wider polity in popular discourse, with men's seasonal absence in town, with larger earthly fortunes. The instantiation of ancestral will was the person of the chief; his physical self was a simile of the ranked community. The famous "first-fruits" ceremony reenacted a congruence between the chief's body and people's harvests, for example, culminating in his fruit-tasting and self-administered anointing. The ancestors of the chief were everybody's ancestors if they were his. Sometimes, after a chief died, continuity was helped by the presence of a bit of his skin or his personal effects, held secretly. While living, he, and very rarely, she, was the life conduit from the past to the present. The chief was concerned, personally and plainly, with judgment, punishment, war, managing natural resources, human and agrarian fertility, propriety and proper form, and every other virile social institution.

⁴⁷ *Sic* throughout and "ca" for *ka*, by SAM-L, Andrew Smith folios, Vol. 12, "Memoranda A." "Swear by" would usually be *go ikana ka*, to tell oneself by.

⁴⁸ Thomas Arbousset, *Voyage d'exploration aux Montagnes Bleues* (Paris: Société des Missions Evangéliques, 1933), 90; Robert Moffat, *Missionary Labours*, 261.

As we have noted, in ordinary discourse, groupings of people assumed the essence of great chiefs of the past. Some chiefs gave their names to chiefdoms before they died (*amaSwazi*, [people-of-] *MmaNtathisi*, *bagaKhama*, *baMonaheng*). The French missionaries, Arbousset and Daumas, touring South Africa in the 1830s, noted that the people did not speak of tribes, but of “the *nation* [*sechaba*] of Moshesh, of Sekaniela, of Makuana” (all chiefs). Even the predatory peoples noted in the Difaqane, the “Lighoyas,” or “Hoja,” indicated “a powerful chief, whose subjects did him the honor to assume his name, a common custom.”⁴⁹ In that manner successful chiefs became the “new ancestors” taking over from “the old.”⁵⁰

Ancestors and chiefs also posed onerous personal demands. They urged one toward power, to incorporate others, or if not other people, at least their cattle; and cattle meant plenty, abundance, and milk for children. But getting cattle was to risk death by the spear. The word ancestor was uttered in sensitive discussions, those concerning power, fortune, warfare, dangerous topics to most farmers, of which they spoke warily if at all. Power belonged to men’s patrilineal, political, semiconfected history, and power recollected ancestors in terms of honor and warfare. Do you have a supreme Ancestor? the missionaries liked to ask. Yes – he “kills men,” came the response. Robert Moffat was told “He” was “a malicious being,” or “evil only, always doing evil.”⁵¹ A syllable similar to that in the word ancestor also occurs in lightning, thunder, giants in lore, windstorms, and perhaps, in a parent language, darkness. A dying chief exclaimed, “An ancestor is killing me,” and one chief even told a missionary he would “kill his ancestor” if he met up with him. Patriarchs fomented warfare. Before the worst violence of the Difaqane era, the German naturalist Lichtenstein found people perceived their ancestors as both good and evil, but D. F. Ellenberger is closer to the norm by 1822: one spoke of a great ancestor as “a pitiless master.”⁵²

Ancestor was a part of the living political vocabulary of the highveld, a way of encompassing experience. As we have seen in our limited examples from the 1810s, the idiom of ancestry and patrilineal genealogy came up at once among senior highveld men in their conversations with pastoralists, traders,

⁴⁹ Arbousset and Daumas, *Narrative*, 305; argued by Norman Etherington, *The Great Treks: The Transformation of Southern Africa, 1815–54* (London: Pearson Education, 2001).

⁵⁰ Prosper Lemue, “Idees religieuses,” and Hinrich Lichtenstein, *Travels in South Africa in the Years 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806* (2 vols.) (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Soc., 1930 [1812–15]), 72 ff.

⁵¹ “He kills men, ... and is in the ground,” John Campbell, *Travels in South Africa ... Second Journey*, Vol. 1, 309; Vol. 2, 111; e.g., Robert Moffat and Mary Moffat, in Isaac Schapera, ed., *Apprenticeship at Kuruman: Being the Journals and Letters of Robert and Mary Moffat, 1820–1828* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1951), 63.

⁵² “[I]s killing me”: M. Lemue, Motito, 1833, “Lettres,” *Journal des Missions Evangeliques*, 9 (1834), 257–76; Moffat, *Missionary Labours*, 263–5; LMS S.A. corr., 8/1/A, Moffat to LMS, April 16, 1819; D. F. Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto, Ancient and Modern*, trans. J. C. Macgregor (London: Caxton, 1912), 239; Campbell, *Travels in South Africa ... Second Journey*, March–June 1820, esp. Vol. 1, 110–11; Vol. 2, 2–5, 11; Lichtenstein, *Travels in South Africa ... 1806*, Vol. 2, 72ff.

The dynamic of the era emerges in one of the few written accounts we have of life north of the Vaal River in the early 1820s, in the country associated with “Barolo,” the people of *rolong* or Barolong. With the Methodist missionaries Samuel Broadbent and Thomas Hodgson, we enter the heart of highveld South Africa, and the Difaqane.

THE WESLEYAN ENCOUNTER WITH THE HIGHVELD, 1822–24

Like so many missionaries, Samuel Broadbent was a young man barely in his twenties when he entered his profession and took a position in the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. His first pastorate was in India, where he fell ill with digestive problems; he married a girl of fifteen from the Franco-Portuguese Catholic settler community in Pondicherry, “on doctor’s orders,” so he would have someone to cook for him. Broadbent demanded that Luisa-Frances and her mother renounce Catholicism and “become true Christians.” Matching Broadbent’s profound dislike of his in-laws’ religion was his distaste for Brahmanism and the racist squirarchies that defined settler life in Tranquebar.⁵⁴ The great sin was to pray before “images,” or “idols,” something Hinduism and Catholicism both encouraged.⁵⁵ Idolatry was a deep betrayal of the possibility of salvation, which required personal faith rather than empty ritual.

Broadbent felt that people might enjoy the most direct communication with the spirit world. In 1816, he had had a “dream of the night, in which I saw an angel clothed in white, who presented me with a Bible, and said, ‘Search the Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation.’”⁵⁶ In 1822, he and Luisa narrowly avoided a posting in Madagascar, and sailed to Cape Town; upon landing, they departed by wagon for Kamiesberg, a small hamlet. There he and other Wesleyans preached to métis, “Hottentot,” and Bushman audiences that their souls were equal to their white masters’, and blessed the divinatory exploration of dreams, long an interface with perceived ancestral will.⁵⁷ Later on, Broadbent, when he was very sick and feeling near death, again dreamed of meeting dead people as heavenly spirits, before being brought around with Constantia wine. He tolerantly reported that he found

⁵⁴ Robert Eric Frykenberg, *Christianity in India: From Beginnings to the Present*, Oxford History of the Christian Church (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); and Robert Eric Frykenberg, “Christian Missions and the Raj,” in Norman Etherington, ed., *Missions and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 107–31; cf. William Carey, e.g., John Clarke Marshman, *The Life and Times of Carey, Marshman, and Ward*, 2 vols. (London, 1859).

⁵⁵ WMMS, personnel files, MMSL 5/137 [Samuel Broadbent], “Louisa Frances or the Escape of an Anglo Indian Girl from Romanism, 1816.” Louisa was b. February 23, 1801; Samuel Broadbent was b. Yorkshire in 1794; W. G. Mears, “The Bechuana Mission or the Advance of Christianity into the Transvaal and the Orange Free State,” in Methodist Missionary Department, ed., *Methodist Missionary*, 4 (1960) (Rondebosch: Methodist Mission), 28–9.

⁵⁶ WMMS, MMSL 5/137, September 1816, “Louisa Frances or the Escape.”

⁵⁷ See Samuel Broadbent, *The Barologs of South Africa* (London: Nichols, 1865); J. Whiteside, *The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa* (London: Stock, 1906);

nonliterate people “praying,” when they were standing alone in the veld in the semisecrecy of the night, speaking under their breath to themselves.⁵⁸

Broadbent complained that he was very often in pain. His persistent diarrhea probably caused him to develop hemorrhoids or fissures. His catchall reference book, a one-volume *Encyclopoedia Permenthes*, could offer him no relief, counseling the sufferer only to “drink whey.” He was thus a fair example of what Johannes Fabian has typified as the norm for the colonial “I” in first-hand accounts: he was febrile and unbalanced. The physicalized, consuming self was a burden for Broadbent, limiting his reach and compromising his judgment. He fought against its demands.⁵⁹

In 1820, the Reverend John Campbell of the London Missionary Society suggested sending missionaries to the “town of Sebinell” (Sefunelo), a name apparently well enough known to resonate. Two years later, Broadbent seized the initiative and the Wesleyan Methodists, not the London Missionary Society, arranged funding. Broadbent’s wife Luisa was pregnant. Together with another young minister named Edward Edwards, with their just initiated families, they hired oxen and servants, and paid the métis brothers, Paul and Jan Engelbrecht, to pilot the wagons going forward. The Engelbrecht clan was to be trusted for this guide work, Paul having given a daughter to wed a European missionary, Jan already an evangelist.⁶⁰ At the same time, it was known that Paul and another Engelbrecht brother, Gerrit, had also ridden with Boer outlaw Adrian van Zijl on a notorious rampage killing Bushmen, before fleeing to the (Little) Korana communities, the Links and Taaibosches – most likely, their own kin.

Directly after the Engelbrecht-Wesleyan missionary party got under way, misfortune struck. Broadbent’s wagon hit a rut, a chain broke, and a wagon slid away from the harness; Broadbent fell to the ground and injured his side. The wagons were rescued by Dutch-speaking métis men who came out from their hamlets along the Orange River, but the trauma was such that Luisa delivered her baby prematurely, and it died. The party detoured back to Griquatown and interred the body at Silver Fountain in Namaqualand. The funeral committee was supervised by Griqua chief Andries Waterboer and a missionary. Two missionaries’ wives lay in the same cemetery. The Reverend and Mrs. David Kay, just back from a journey to Dithakong, attended the funeral. Afterward the Kays spoke cautiously to the Broadbents, perhaps over

and Samuel Broadbent, *Narrative of the Introduction of Christianity among the Barolong* (London: Wesleyan Mission House, 1865).

⁵⁸ WMMS, S.A. corr., Samuel Broadbent, Griquatown, July 1, 1824; quote: WMMS, Missionaries’ Papers, Box 600, Samuel Broadbent, “Reminiscences,” ms. notebook, “part first,” n.d., 31 (to November 1, 1822) and 155.

⁵⁹ In Broadbent’s box of possessions in SOAS’s WMMS collection. Johannes Fabian, *Out of Our Minds: Reason and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000): depression was common; cf. Moffat, in Schapera, ed., *Apprenticeship*, 83; and Lemue, Mosega, March 1832, in R. C. Germond, *Chronicles of Basutoland*, 88.

⁶⁰ They were termed “Bastard-Hottentots,” often denoting slave-free offspring from the Cape. Penn, “Orange River,” 55.

tea. The Kays had witnessed the effects of warfare, and from what they had seen, the interior was “unsettled.” They would discourage any effort to travel upcountry.

Broadbent and Edwards and their families disregarded their advice and returned to their wagons. They spent another twenty-six nights on the veld in an effort to reach chief Sefunelo, until Broadbent nearly died of dehydration exacerbated by his diarrhea, and they all had to turn back. One can hardly imagine the agony of the defeated return trip, over the sand and rock, the dried up Vaal riverbed so hot in the midday sun that no flies bothered the oxen. Once they finally reached the Colony, Broadbent needed six months to recuperate under a German physician, at a Boer homestead (the Faures’s) near Schweitzer-Reneke. He never again enjoyed good health, by his own lights, and he described himself as “emaciated” afterward; but even so, he recommitted himself to another trek. This time Broadbent and his family met Thomas Laidon Hodgson, thirty-three years old, and his wife, at Graaf-Reinet at Schweitzer-Reneke. The party numbered fifteen or twenty including servants and retinue, with scores of oxen to back up the teams under yoke. They clattered away in the dust in early November 1822. It would be Broadbent’s final attempt to reach Sefunelo and “the Bootschuana tribes” to the northeast.

Again the missionary party met with unexpected setbacks, even before reaching Griquatown. For their safety and security they had to rely on métis rustlers who were sullen and “disrespectful.” It became necessary to borrow trek oxen from the lone government agent in the vicinity, John Melvill, a former evangelist with the London Missionary Society. They had to hire mountain métis (*bergenaars*) at another crossing, a “bold and lawless class of men.” Although the expedition was funded by their Methodist brethren and nominally devoted to evangelism, there were no Engelbrechts with them this time, and some of their staff no doubt had their own reasons for traveling. An ugly verbal altercation made it suddenly clear that they had no authority over the drivers. When the party reached Griquatown, on December 11, Andries Waterboer met them and confessed he had sold off their horses, thinking them dead. Some further intelligence about the situation ahead of them must have reached the staff, for when Broadbent and Hodgson insisted on pushing on toward Korana settlements of unknown sympathy, the employees left en masse, the only people staying with them being “Plaatje, the Botschuana [*sic*] boy, and Prince, a Bushman,” and perhaps a few shepherds.⁶¹

FATHERS AND BROTHERS

The first Korana chief they encountered, and whose hospitality they accepted, indeed acted aggressively toward them: he tried to stop them from moving

⁶¹ For Waterboer, Moffat, *Missionary Labours and Scenes*, 199–200, reprinted in Schoeman, *The Mission at Griquatown, 1801–1821* (Griquatown and Cape Town: Griqua Tourism, National Book Printers, 1997), 129.

farther. The missionaries protested to this Chief “Chudeeps” that they could tarry for only a few days, that they just had to reach the highveld farmers, as that is where “our fathers have sent us.” Any change in plans meant contacting these “fathers,” which would take at least six months to effect. Chudeeps was thus “astounded,” and asked rather if their fathers would not probably be more pleased (in other words: say they will ...) if the missionaries would instead remain with him. For good.

Eventually the conflict got out of hand. There was a scuffle, a struggle over the reins tethered to the oxen, the driver shouting “Trekmaar!” as the missionaries produced a flurry of “gifts” off the rear of their retreating wagons. The first glimmering of a theological dialogue on the highveld yielded this: the chief would confiscate their unyoked oxen and cattle but would not chase the wagons down and bind the newcomers by force. When Hodgson returned alone from a not-so-nearby camp after a few days, to beg, the chief held onto the cattle. The missionaries in their writing chose to depict the situation with a light touch, emphasizing the supposedly pathetic aspect of the *chief* (“I’d lay down and sigh my life out if you left,” Chudeeps supposedly said) and not their own peril. Not only were the cattle their wealth but their means of transport.⁶²

Improbably, they got their oxen back again after the entire region was evacuated of its population. Word had come of a traveling mass of people – “cannibals,” according to some – moving toward the Orange. Reunited with their herd but fleeing in disarray, the two missionary families and their few valets rattled onward. They had no map and no clear destination, and after some weeks in early 1823 – traveling evenings and mornings, their speed was about two miles per hour – the wagons ended up in the vicinity of Bloemhof on the Vaal River. It was the hottest month of the year, in a season of drought. Here they ran out of provisions, and the oxen, if not the people, would have soon begun to perish. Happily, men were sent out to find them, and they were rescued.

The name of the chief whose scouts located the missionary party was Tshabadira. Chief Tshabadira (“Sabadeer”) ruled over people situated under a recognized faction of the dominant ranking association. They were a relatively orthodox instantiation of highveld politics, in other words, not “cannibals,” nor “Mantatees” (*MmaNtathisi*), *Liboya*, “Dogs,” nor other wild aggressors so feared by travelers in this period. Tshabadira claimed to be Sefunelo’s brother, and his people said they were ruled by Chief Sefunelo; the main house of Sefunelo’s patrilineal heritage was called “of Seleka,” the proper name of their touted ancestor. In the past, Sefunelo had attracted many immigrants to live under him as the representative of Seleka, coming to reside in his court,

⁶² In addition to Broadbent’s “Reminiscences” and other letters, I am drawing on SAL, MSC 39/13 Bks. 7 to 12, Thomas Hodgson’s manuscript journals, and his correspondence at SOAS in the WMMS archive; along with R. L. Cope, ed., *Journals of the Rev. T. L. Hodgson (1821–31)* (Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand Press, 1977), and William Shaw, ed., *Memoirs of Mrs. Anne Hodgson, Compiled from the Materials Furnished by Her Husband, the Rev. T. L. Hodgson* (London, 1836); 148 ff. is cited by Worger, “Parsing God.”

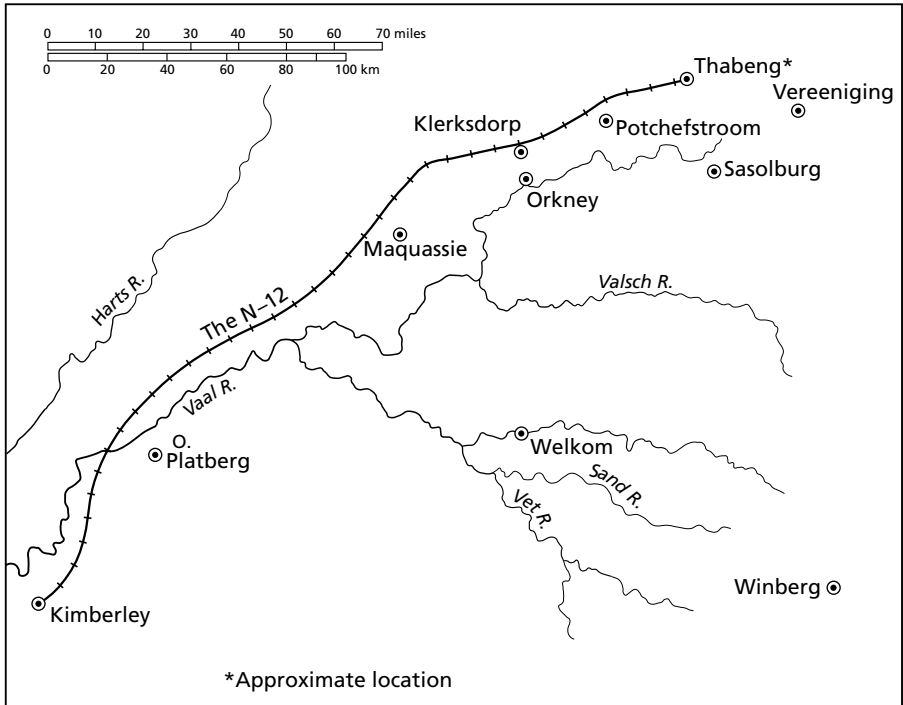


FIGURE 1.2. Vaal-Vet-Valsch (Nta)-Harts headwaters, mapped with the modern “N-12” highway from Kimberley to Vereeniging. After a map drawn by the author.

Seleka court, within his big town. But now Sefunelo was less secure, and trekking eastward somewhere north of the Vaal. Four other “brothers” had been comrades in arms and now were no longer with him.

Tshabadira continued his people’s trudge northward, on some task the missionaries did not understand. It speaks to the lack of confidence in the Christian party that several shepherds or new hangers-on wanted to follow Tshabadira, to pledge themselves to him as “people of Seleka,” for Sefunelo was a “great king,” a “great chief” (*kgosi e kgolo* in the manuscript letter), and to leave the missionaries, who were ignorant of the terrain. Tired and hungry, sometimes feverish, Broadbent and Hodgson and their group trekked eastward into Sefunelo’s country for ten more days, tracing a path toward modern-day Orkney. Again they were succored, by a scout (“Rampy Sampy”) who had been charged specifically to look for them by Sefunelo.

The scout conducted them to Sefunelo’s hillside settlement where they were permitted to rest and recover. The town they found there was a simple one, called “Place of the Hill” (*ga thaba* or *thabeng*), lying near what is today Schoonspruit, a bit to the north of modern Potchefstroom.

SEFUNELO AND HIS COURT

Sefunelo ruled Thabeng in the name of his fathers, and particularly his great-grandfather Seleka, which placed his domain within the people-of-*rolong* (“Barolo,” “Barolows,” *barolong*) chiefdoms, an order to be discussed later.⁶³ There appear to have been 600 households more or less, or around 2,500 people of Seleka and their allies, behind Sefunelo.⁶⁴ The missionaries drew on the idea of the tribes of Israel and saw biblical parallels to the situation of the highveld chiefdoms, their apparently natural association, their rootlessness. They simply called his small chiefdom a tribe: Sefunelo’s tribe, or the Seleka tribe, or “a tribe of Barolongs.” In the missionaries’ initial view, all Sefunelo’s people followed Sefunelo, as they were all Barolongs and had no choice in the matter. As had Campbell with “the Griqua,” the missionaries essentialized political autonomy, equating it with race. They denied politics to Africans even as they encountered African politics. They positioned the de facto chiefdom as Sefunelo’s birthright, even, most intriguingly, when the shape of that chiefdom changed before their eyes.

And change the chiefdom did during the year 1823, as Broadbent and Hodgson and Sefunelo’s people trekked about from Thabeng to Maquassie (*mathwase*) to “Platberg,” a métis settlement, and back again to Maquassie (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2), and to other sites in between, some of them ruins from past habitations, some bare encampments on the veld. The people of Seleka (*baseleka* or *bagaseleka*) came under increasing threat, and bore heavy attacks at their cattle posts, and they knew hunger. Sefunelo’s following was cut in half, and nearly half again from 1822 to 1826, and the chief controlled but thirty-five huts at his lowest ebb.⁶⁵ In the end, most followers decided they were not people of Seleka after all. Over this four-year period, the remaining diehards traveled hundreds of miles by foot.⁶⁶ While they suffered raids by hostile patrols and militias, eventually they began to receive new adherents in destitute refugees from broken regimes, making up some of their losses. Through all this, Broadbent and Hodgson somehow understood the “Seleka” chiefdom and name as uncontested, as residing in the nature of its people.

It pleased the chief to sit in the presence of Europeans who so took to heart his mandate to rule. They gave him gifts and mouthed incoherent phrases.

⁶³ But see John Comaroff, “Rules and Rulers: Political Processes in a Tswana Chiefdom,” *Man*, 13, 1 (1978), 1–20.

⁶⁴ Sefunelo is mentioned in 1821 in the correspondence of John Campbell written in Mashowe’s town, a few days away from “the town of Sebinell” (*sic*). LMS, S.A. corr., 8/3A, “Cambell,” July 9, 1821, “Brief Statement,” and September 5, 1821, “Cities of Mashowe and Kurreechane.”

⁶⁵ Moffat, in Schapera, ed., *Apprenticeship at Kuruman*, 56; Etherington, *Great Treks*, 136 ff. on chiefs’ survival.

⁶⁶ A plausible if over-ethnicized reconstruction of their movements is M. Kinsman, “Hungry Wolves: The Impact of Violence on Rolong Life, 1823–1836,” 363–94, in Carolyn Hamilton, ed., *The Mfecane Aftermath* (Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand, 1995). The twentieth-century tribalized oral tradition version is captured in M. S. W. Kalane, *Botshelo jwa ga Kgosi Albert S. Moroka* (Pietermaritzburg: Shooter and Shuter, 1991), 1–11.

But soon enough it became clear to Sefunelo as to most highveld chiefs that the missionaries constituted a disruptive force. They advocated for another father, another great king, a *kgosi e kgolo*, who condemned critical aspects of Sefunelo's authority even as they naturalized his "people" as such-and-such. If the chief's subjects had an innate integrity, they might flourish even as his rule was weakened. Sefunelo began to cast a cold eye on the men in frock coats.

At the same time, he had more pressing concerns. One chief in particular terrorized his people. Hailing from the Sand River, an ambitious, hostile leader named Moletsane gathered warriors and sent them out against Sefunelo and his allies. His goal in 1823 was to drive them from their capital at Thabeng. Moletsane's men were in fact a collection of unrelated factions, who took first this then that communal name. Moletsane aspired to Sefunelo's same level, neither acknowledging the other's seniority, neither respecting the other's genealogical assertions.

Sefunelo employed dissenting métis gunmen, such as the so-called New Zealanders and Jan Taaibosch, now called Jan Kaptein, and his men. The Reverend John Edwards, who arrived several years after Broadbent and Hodgson, later described Kaptein as the best of all the "chiefs of African tribes." Moletsane secured an alliance with another Korana, a chief Moakabi. They repeatedly attacked Sefunelo's town, and each time, Sefunelo's people fled, driving ahead what cattle they could. Their men consoled themselves by hunting down Moletsane's stragglers afterward and killing them.⁶⁷

Soon enough the missionaries began asking Sefunelo to opt out of this system. To begin, they begged him, withdraw your eldest son, Moroka (Raindoctor), from his militarized cohort: refrain from circumcising him. Yes, yes, this sounded extreme. But had not they already explained the truer meaning of the custom among their – or rather Jesus' and David's – ancestors? And the reason for its subsequent abandonment, that there was no need for a bodily covenant with the king of kings? Sefunelo was unimpressed. The idea of abandoning circumcision was tantamount to abandoning the future of his chieftom. Another powerful chief in the north, Sekgoma, wondered aloud, "How should I answer Khari?" his father, were he to comply with such a request.⁶⁸ In Thabeng, hostile refugees drove Sefunelo's people from their town, for a second time wrecking the year's meager harvest; but when he led them back home in the early fall, Sefunelo convoked a circumcision school (*bogwera*) for Moroka and all the other boys of age.

⁶⁷ S. M. Molema, *Chief Moroka: His Life, His Times, His Country and His People* (London: Methodist Publishing House, 1953), 32; John Edwards, *Reminiscences of the Early Life and Missionary Labours of the Rev. John Edwards, Fifty Years a Wesleyan Missionary in South Africa* (London: T. Woolmer, 1886), 103, 110–11. See also Norman Etherington's lively treatment in *The Great Treks*, 136–7.

⁶⁸ Today given as Kgari; John Mackenzie, *Day-Dawn in Dark Places* (London: Cassell, 1883), 218; and see Margaret Kinsman, "'Beasts of Burden': The Subordination of Southern Tswana Women, ca. 1800–1840," *Journal of Southern African Studies* (Special Issue on Women in Southern Africa), 10, 1 (1983), 39–54, esp. 48, 50.

The chief understood that circumcision worked like a machine for producing useful, socialized, masculine power. In the early twentieth century in Botswana, at least, the boys in circumcision schools were carefully ranked. Within each town and village, each subcourt's young men were attended to in strict descending order. As the order of the circumcisions described absolute seniority, none would rank higher than Sefunelo's son, Moroka. Only a visiting Marico denizen, a "Hurutshe" (*ha-rotse*) person, outranked a chief's son. All the other boys followed the royals, each taking medicine so as not to be "overshadowed" by any other, each with his senior before him, and his junior behind him, "so they should not quarrel."⁶⁹ Any ranking ambiguities were worked out on the spot, because the top experts, as well as the chief himself, were all present.

For the boys, Moroka and his peers in and around Thabeng, the cutting of their bodies – the painful removal of their foreskins – at the end of an intensive learning period made them men: full participants in highveld politics, knowing their position in the scheme of things. After the boys' weeks in circumcision school, Sefunelo intended to move all his people to a new location, and he sent his experts to lay out a court at Maquassie (*mathwase*), near today's town of Wolmaranstad. In virgin highveld settlements, wards were often quite widely spaced, sometimes by open veld. Young men, upon marrying and accumulating means, might move to these ranked spaces with room to grow. It was circumcision, condemned by the missionaries, which permitted this ordered settlement.

The missionaries, when they were also allowed to reconnoiter Maquassie, set up their tents "at a convenient distance on one side" of the town. This signaled the alien nature of their society in the settled community. On the other hand, the missionaries were assumed to desire to expand their dependents and were given slaves: Chudeeps came to visit Maquassie after some months to try to sell them a girl in order to demonstrate his "friendship," and Sefunelo "gave" a boy of fourteen, Ditsiragae, to Broadbent, who named him John and treated him like a kind of assistant or "apprentice." In June, the missionaries voiced a new optimism, remarking on the substantial town Sefunelo had commissioned and of the "increas[ed] importance" of their station.⁷⁰ This was the high point of their own self-valuation at Maquassie.

In July, while Broadbent was still busy fixing packing-crate panels to his mud-hewn windows to make shutters, news came about a bloody battle in Dithakong the previous month. At once the missionaries were (again) deserted by their servants. Over the next weeks, reports of death swirled around them,

⁶⁹ Isaac Schapera, *Kgatla Initiation* (Mochudi: Boleswa, 1978), 6, 14, the examples being from the people of chief Kgafela, a division of the decentralized monkey (*kgatla*) patrilineages in the twentieth century.

⁷⁰ WMMS S.A. corr., fiche 300, 2/2, Broadbent and Hodgson, Maquassie, January 1, 1824, original in the present tense. Bogachu also had one boy, a twelve-year-old orphan supplied by Sefunelo: WMMS, Missionaries' Papers, Broadbent, "Reminiscences," second part, 104–7. Ditsiragae/John became a Thaba Nchu preacher and teacher, and a printer, an "almost legendary figure" at his death in 1904 according to Mears, "The Bechuana Mission," 34.

and as in a daze, never knowing quite what was happening, they tell in their letters of abandoned bodies, widespread hunger, and panic. One morning a corpse appeared on Hodgson's doorstep, the eyes pecked out by crows.⁷¹

In the midst of these perilous times, the churchmen from Sefunelo's point of view acted in an increasingly insulting and even stupid manner. They gave away precious beads to their servants, like they were worth nothing, but were tightfisted with him. They treated his son, Moroka, as they would their cook. On one trip to purchase provisions at Griquatown, they tried to deny him a seat, pressing him to ride in the wagonbed under cover with the tackle and provisions. They backed down on that occasion, but later on, when Moroka tried to recover his dignity by demanding that Broadbent give some beads and tobacco to "a bushman captain" he was entertaining, he was refused. The Bushman chief even upbraided Broadbent to his face. Then, the missionaries invited Peter Links and his family, "Left-hand" (Little) Korana who had been attached to the Wesleyans since 1816, to live with them in their satellite community, without asking Sefunelo's permission.⁷²

Most offensive of all, the missionaries patently disliked eating or drinking with Chief Sefunelo. At one state function the chief ceremoniously cut the missionaries' meat into pieces and fed them by hand, a great privilege. But time and time again the pastors preferred to send a boy for their food, and then eat by themselves.⁷³ Finally one Sunday, Sefunelo walked the several hundred yards to Broadbent's hut and found him and Hodgson drinking coffee together. The chief said he was surprised they would do so "without asking him to drink also." Broadbent offered what must have seemed at the time like a good reply, and said that he knew coffee wouldn't agree with the chief's stomach – Heaven knew Broadbent was an expert on that topic. Leaving their company, Sefunelo turned around at the door: Why would the missionaries drink something that upset other people's stomachs?

There was no answer to this. The missionaries' separation from the world of production and consumption was profound and unbridgeable. After this, Sefunelo stopped visiting them. Weeks passed after the missionaries notified him of their success in drilling a working well for their own use, after they

⁷¹ WMMS S.A. corr., fiche 300, 2/2/ Broadbent and Hodgson, Maquassie, January 1, 1824; and SAL, MSC 39/13 Bks. 7 to 12, Thomas Hodgson, ms. extracts from journal, January 12, 1824. John Edwards, *Reminiscences*, reported finding human remains ("skulls") in 1833, 101 ff. On Edwards (1804–87), see SAL, Cape Town, Gordon Mears, A 266 768 MET/MEA 287/AP Methodist Missionaries no. 4; and Penn, "Orange River," 58; and more generally, L. L. B. Machobane, *Christianization and African Response: A Comparative View of Religious Conversion among the Barolong and Basotho of the Caledon Valley, 1820–1890* (Roma, Lesotho: Institute of South Africa Studies, 1993).

⁷² WMMS, Missionaries' Papers, Box 600, Broadbent, "Reminiscences," "part first," Kamiesberg, December 1820, 47; Mr. Louise Francis Broadbent, n.d.; Jacob Links assisted James Archbell among Nama-speakers in 1818: Mears, "Methodist Missionaries," ms., previous note, "Archbell," and see Chapter 3.

⁷³ Broadbent, "Reminiscences," as above, and "Part Second," 109–10; Schoeman, *Griqua*, 100.

had invited him to see it. A critical resource had been established within the chief's jurisdiction. Finally Sefunelo appeared at the well with Tshabadira and Maquar, another putative brother, as well as his son Moroka, and a train of lesser chiefs. Chief Sefunelo declared himself "delighted" to find the well's water "cool" and "limpid" (*dintle!*), and left it to the Christians' care, remarking on the abilities of their "ancestor" who *must* have told them how to proceed, "for if he had not, you never could have discovered it yourself."⁷⁴

On his last emergency wagon trip back west (to Campbell Town) to collect a little maize, Hodgson saw ample evidence of the horrors of war. He saw herdboys dead and mutilated; wanderers reduced to eating dogs and cow's dung; starving women, shell-shocked, cooking and eating human legs – three women amid two male corpses, to be exact. The chief's heir, Moroka, newly circumcised with his teenage regiment, also told of "several small parties, chiefly women," similarly "feasting upon the bodies of the dead." Moroka's men either killed them or left them to starve.⁷⁵

Late in 1823 the missionaries learned of the arrival in Maquassie of a party of refugees, some people of the crocodile (*bakwena*) who had been driven from their land by the *Mantatees*, the regiments of MmaNtathisi, a warlord chieftainess, or by others in league with her. The mixed crocodile "Baquains" were not "hordes" or "cannibals," but refugees worse off even than Sefunelo's beleaguered people: indeed this is most likely why they were identified only as "of the crocodile." In December, at a formal hearing of all men, armed, in the court space, Tshabadira, Sefunelo's "brother," championed the crocodile cause, and an alliance for plunder was formed. The town would field regiments to track down the refugees' missing cattle and mount a further campaign of reprisal, keeping a healthy dividend of the recovered herds for themselves.

Their senior pastor, the Reverend Broadbent, reacted to the plan by suggesting in a public forum that the Seleka militias had no right to take other chiefs' cattle. Indeed, they might just as well steal the mission's own oxen, Broadbent warned. The beasts were private property, he said: other people's property. This was a direct challenge to the right of the new generation to add to their households by raiding for cattle. It was treated with scorn.

At this precise juncture, Broadbent made his first attempts to preach in the local language. We will return more deliberately to the activity of preaching later on, but here is what Broadbent said. Assembling a group of people he called "the more intelligent of the natives," he asked that they repeat his words.

⁷⁴ WMMS, S.A. corr., fiche 300, 2/2, Broadbent and Hodgson, Maquassie, January 1, 1824, and SAL, MSC 39/13 Bks. 7 to 12, Hodgson, Journals, September 23, 1823, also Cope, ed., *Journals*, 109. Compare the struggle over the irrigation channel at Kuruman, where the chiefship supported local women in tapping the "mission's" water: Jacobs, *Environment*, 59; and see Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation*, Vol. 1, 206 ff; and Chapter 3 below.

⁷⁵ WMMS, S.A. corr., fiche 300, Hodgson, Maquassie January 12, 1824; re August 9 and 13, 1823.

Hara oa rona u mo ligudimong (“Father, our, who art above”). I then asked, whether they knew who was meant by our Father above? No, was the general answer; we do not know who you mean. Addressing one of our cattle watchers by name, Roboque [“Broken”], don’t you know who it is we speak to in these words? He burst out in laughter; no, said he, I have no father above!⁷⁶

There was no God here, but even worse, everything was upside down. The “Bechuana” had fathers, not above ground, but just as Campbell had found in Dithakong, *under* it, where they were buried. Broadbent would not say, “Our father who art below,” as he could not countenance downward as a divine direction. Instead, just as he had with “Chudeeps,” he returned to the apparently common idiom of paternity and genealogy:

I was at a stand for a moment, but soon replied, You know that we exist, and descended from our progenitors, and they from theirs, and so on to the first of human kind; but who gave them being? Several voices answered, – “Ancestor” (*modimo*)!

Broadbent had named his mode for asserting authority over Sefunelo, and he used it thenceforth. There was a great chief, a first ancestor, a *larger* form of union. Now it happened that a lad from among the crocodile refugees had stolen a sheep from the missionaries, and slaughtered it, undoubtedly out of desperation. Sefunelo imposed a death sentence on the adolescent until Broadbent intervened and told him not to, that he had no such authority. In fact, “whosoever sheds man’s blood, his blood will be shed” (Gen. 9:5–6), he said. Sefunelo, having heard that all property deserved universal protection, and that all dissenting views therein were sinful, now heard that thieves could not be punished, because they were people and so “not your property.” The next day Broadbent was peppered with questions about the great Chief or these “chiefs” (*dikgosi*). Was he one of them, as he seemed to imply? Was the Griqua Resident Magistrate one? What was the nature of their power?⁷⁷ What was clear to Sefunelo was that cattle were to be withheld, and people left undisciplined, all because of the authority the missionaries claimed to cherish, that of “the chief of chiefs.”

Suddenly Broadbent and Hodgson found themselves living with “a nation of thieves.” In unannounced visits, with flimsy excuses or simple stealth, people now robbed them. Erstwhile friends and petitioners took their cattle, their personal items, their clothing, the produce of their gardens. This was the lesson their listeners drew from Broadbent’s logic. Later, in this free-for-all, the boy whom Broadbent and Hodgson had saved from execution returned to Maquassie and stole a sheep from them again, hoping for the best. This time, however, the missionaries realized their mistake, and handed him over to Sefunelo to be killed. Sefunelo advertised the sentence, and appointed his son, Moroka, to carry it out: death by bludgeoning.

⁷⁶ Broadbent, “Reminiscences,” “Part Second,” as above. In Samuel Broadbent, *Narrative of the Introduction of Christianity*, 81–4, the Sechuana is “Hara a chona ye le mo gudeemo.”

⁷⁷ Broadbent, *Narrative*, 84. Lowercase y in “You” in original; “ancestor” untranslated in original, as in (my) parentheses; and Broadbent, “Reminiscences,” “Part Second,” 136.

Hodgson left the field in February of 1824, no doubt feeling he had not accomplished very much, at least by conventional standards. He would return in 1825 with the Reverend James Archbell and serve less eventfully until the end of 1830. Edward Edwards, having come and gone again, bore a nickname from Sefunelo meaning “fickle.” Broadbent left for Griquatown in April to live and recuperate further from his debilitating diarrhea and find refuge for his parturient wife. And so for a brief period there were no missionaries at Maquassie. Almost at once, as on cue, “five tribes,” or “hordes,” attacked the town. They made off with the vast bulk of the Seleka chiefdom’s herds, torched the thatch rondavels, emptied the grain bins, smashed Broadbent’s prized telescope, and set fire to the missionaries’ houses.⁷⁸

Andries Waterboer, the Christian Griqua chief of the new order, who had supervised the burial of the Broadbents’ infant, led mounted men in “recapturing” the people-of-Seleka chiefship’s cattle. He expropriated 600 head from what he secured, and returned a far lesser number to Sefunelo at the smoking ruins of Maquassie, on the grounds that Sefunelo was responsible for all the trouble, and he had likely ransacked the missionaries’ premises himself. Who indeed had done it? The terrible hordes Robert Moffat saw at Dithakong? The “army of Mootchua,” the “Mantatees,” or “Fetcani” (“hordes”)? Such terms circulated as a kind of running paradigm with which to understand fast-unfolding events. But according to some of Sefunelo’s “uncles,” the allies of his father’s generation, it was Sefunelo who did the damage. The Reverend Edwards, no friend to Sefunelo, passed the accusation over to Melvill, a governmental ally, who had earlier loaned Broadbent a team of oxen. Melvill officially rubber-stamped Waterboer’s extortion and dishonestly reported by post that Sefunelo “consented” to the “fine.” In fact Melvill threatened Sefunelo that “the missionaries,” Congregationalists and Methodists, might deploy Griqua against him, whensoever they chose. Sefunelo pathetically repeated, “Am I not a chief?”⁷⁹

Months later, Andries Stockenström, wielding the full authority of the imperial Cape Colony administration, decided it was Moletsane’s men who had done all the damage, after all, and not a play-acting Sefunelo, and he ordered Waterboer’s Griqua to repay the 600 cattle. Only Waterboer never complied.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Mears, “Bechauana,” 38; Broadbent, *Narrative*, 165; Schapera, ed., *Apprenticeship*, 146–9; WMMS, Broadbent, “Reminiscences,” “Part Third,” refers to Moffat to Broadbent, June 19, 1824, and Edward Edwards to Broadbent, Sunday, July 3, 1824, and Friday, July 16, 1824; and see John Edwards, *Reminiscences*, 26ff., 112.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, all. For Melvill’s tale, see BPP, 1836 (538), Vol. VII and 1837 (425), Vol. VII: Reports, *Select Committee on Aborigines (British settlements)*, Vol. 1, 155, also extracted in Francis H. S. Orphan and David Arnot, *The Land Question in Griqualand West, An Inquiry ...* (London: S. Solomon, 1875), June 6, 1837, 68; see Elizabeth Elbourne, “The Sin of the Settler: The 1835–36 *Select Committee on Aborigines* and Debates over Virtue and Conquest in the Early Nineteenth-Century British White Settler Empire,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 4, 3 (Winter 2003), on line.

⁸⁰ Cf. D. F. Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto*, 167 ff.

It was the sum total of this kind of insecurity, as much as in particular the attacks by rival chiefs and the repeated loss of the harvest, which drove Sefunelo to find new ground. At the same time, Moletsane's men had begun to call themselves "the people of the lion," not a sign of moderation. Sefunelo therefore launched his chieftom on another strenuous, northward trek, away from this tumult. His people walked for days and weeks on end, bringing their importunate need for food and shelter to ever more distant cousins. Eventually Sefunelo led them to the people of Tshidi, living under their old chief Tawana. The chiefs recognized their two courts, of Seleka and of Tshidi, as ranked in brotherhood.

Sefunelo took the junior role, because, as the saying went, "the elephant that crosses the river becomes a little elephant." Together in their *rolong* or "Barolong" partnership they lived in Khunwana, side by side. Soon the partnered courts were uprooted under attack and took again to the veld. The combined people of Seleka and people of Tshidi could not defend against Moletsane and his gun-toting allies in their coordinated attacks. On August 24, 1824, Tshabadira was killed in battle, and Tawana's chieftom was especially decimated.

In November of 1824, "Bastards, Matlaroos, Coranas, and Bushmen" also attacked Robert Moffat's mission at Kuruman (*kudumane*), "New Latakoo" (New Dithakong).⁸¹ The region's denizens scattered, some flying to Cape farmlands, hundreds more seeking shelter with métis mountain rebels. The missionaries' fortunes had hit a low point. Their work was seemingly at an end, their possessions gone, their tiny congregations dispersed. A phase of insecurity had swept north from the Orange River over the highveld, bringing destruction.⁸² Even Moletsane, the Seleka tormenter, would come to rue, "I was once a great [*golo*] man, but I have now only about thirty men ... [my people] are scattered all over the country ... the mothers eat their own children."⁸³

DEBATES ABOUT THE MFECANE OR HIGHVELD DIFAQANE

What had happened?

Historians of South Africa refer to this period (ca. 1817–1826) as the *Mfecane* and particularly north of the Orange River, as the *Difaqane*. The name was most likely derived from the derogatory term for the perpetrators of widespread suffering, "faqane," although the usage has never been documented. A "faqane" or "fetcani" drove Mothibe to take his people to live under

⁸¹ Moffat to Broadbent, Kuruman, November 17, 1824, referenced in WMMS, Broadbent, "Reminiscences," "Part Third" as above.

⁸² Etherington, *The Great Treks*, 136–7, and 168, emphasizes Moletsane's savvy as a chameleon and colonially aware state-builder. Bergenaars and Bantu-speakers, see LMS, John Philip Papers, 14/1/A, Melvill to LMS, Griquatown, 1824.

⁸³ Moffat, in Schapera, ed., *Apprenticeship*, 56.

Waterboer at Griquatown in 1820, for instance. But if peaceful villagers were “wretched savages” in the eyes of so many literates in this period, can the use of the word “horde” tell us much? According to the early syntheses, as originally imagined by Stowe, Theal, and other early historians, Zulu warriors from the east expressed a new kind of ferocity, expanding with unprecedented violence from the uMfolozi River and driving people from the eastern grasslands outward and upward over the mountains and onto the highveld. Within the Zulu domain, one man, Shaka, their mad king, was responsible for the upheaval. It was this Shaka the terrible who drove Mzilikazi (of “the Ndebele”) northwest and who expelled chief Mpangazitha (of “the Hlubi”) and chief Matiwane (of “the Ngwane”) westward and northward, respectively, in turn driving starving people onto the open veld, – who became “hordes” (*difaqane*).

The linking of both order (Zulu, Ndebele) and disorder (refugees, hordes) with a special level of savagery supposedly proper to the era, throws the rubric itself into question. The idea of a growing domain of terror was touted by speculators who hoped for imperial military backing to secure the value of their future real estate holdings. As already noted, several aspects of the Zulu-centric story were seriously challenged a generation ago by Cobbing, and more has been revised after that.⁸⁴ Historians, however, are wary of jettisoning one of the surpassingly few concepts from South African history that nonspecialists have heard of, an effect partly of the debate itself. The term “Mfecane” at least has remained in use.

On the highveld, the early nineteenth century’s turmoil may have been accelerated by the extension of Portuguese commercial interests from coastal ports,

⁸⁴ See Hamilton, ed., *Mfecane Aftermath*, for wider citations and a review of this fascinating historiographical problem, first put forth by Julian Cobbing, “The Mfecane as Alibi: Thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolompo,” *Journal of African History*, 29 (1988), 487–519, and in papers such as “Jettisoning the Mfecane with Perestroika,” August 1988, stemming from interactions with colleagues including Shula Marks, John (J. B.) Wright, e.g., “Politics, Ideology, and the Invention of the Nguni,” Tom Lodge, ed., *Resistance and Ideology in Settler Societies*, Vol. 4 (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1986), 96–118; in this vein, two seminal Ph.D.s were Henry Slater, “Transitions in the Political Economy of Southeast Africa before 1840,” University of Sussex, 1976; and David W. Hedges, “Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” University of London, 1978). See also Cobbing, “Grasping the Nettle: The Slave Trade and the Early Zulu,” in D. R. Edgecombe, J. P. C. Laband, and P. S. Thompson, eds., *The Debate on Zulu Origins: A Selection of Papers on the Zulu Kingdom and Early Colonial Natal* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1992); John P. C. Laband, *Rope of Sand* (Cape Town: Jonathan Ballard, 1995), chapter 2; and Carolyn Hamilton, “Ideology, Oral Tradition and the Struggle for Power in the Early Zulu Kingdom,” unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Witwatersrand, 1986; and now J. B. Wright, “Turbulent Times: Political Transformations in the North and East, 1760s–1830s,” chapter 5 in Robert Ross et al., eds., *The Cambridge History of South Africa*, Vol. 1, ca. 200 – 1885 (London: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 211–52; Elizabeth Eldredge, “Shaka’s Battles: Chronology and Mortality, c. 1815–1828, unpublished paper, African Studies Association, November 14, 2008; see also Jurg Emil Richner, “The Historiographical Development of the Concept ‘mfecane’ and the Writing of Early Southern African History, from the 1820s to 1920s,” M.A. Thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 2005.

but it has not yet been convincingly explained just how. The violence of the era may also have reflected the advent and decimation of maize as a food crop, since American “Indian corn” permeated highveld farms in the prior century, and while it outyields sorghum and millet in wet years, it perishes quickly in diminished rainfall, such as the drought of 1822–24. Again, however, there is little agreement among scholars about how such crises create particular political behaviors. The historian Elizabeth Eldredge has shown that the fear of enslavement may have stimulated aggregation on the highveld from the 1790s on, even if not in the Zulu east. The period 1817 to 1826 was clearly not the first time in the history of the highveld that South African men put one another to the sword, but it represented the overlap of growing insecurity due to métis and third-party slaving in the borderlands, and an acute drought; and it drew the participation of all the competitive and expanding orders of the highveld.⁸⁵

Indeed it is clear that chiefdoms on the highveld attacked one another in violent raids long before any Zulu-stimulated provocation. MmaNtathisi, for instance, was a chieftainess (called a “regent”) of partial descent from a chiefdom once based in Marothodi and called “of Tlokwa”; she struck at others pro-actively. Rumor was useful to those hoping for power and security, and willing to fight. Well before Mpangazitha and Matiwane arrived from the war zones of the east, MmaNtathisi’s young men spread terror and promulgated a popular image of themselves as undefeatable, rampaging over the land, murdering and “eating” even defenseless victims.⁸⁶

Men who were able to order themselves into ranks, to act in concert with one another for a common end, tended to find a chief or an ancestor to live under, even if he or she lacked real authority. A few accounts famous in the literature, however, suggest that masses of truly disorganized people occasionally overran villages and consumed foodstuffs. Terror and killing struck Dithakong in June of 1823, brought by men, women and children apparently near starvation. The Griqua and the missionaries there met them with rifle fire and killed several hundred people, according to the Reverend Robert Moffat, who participated.⁸⁷

The survivors of the *di-faqane* or “hordes” then disincorporated into smaller sections, some children going to local Boers perhaps, other people to mission

⁸⁵ Elizabeth Eldredge, “Slavery on the Southern Highveld,” in Elizabeth Eldredge and Fred Morton, *Slavery in South Africa: Captive Labor on the Dutch Frontier* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview; Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, 1994), chapter 4; Eldredge, “Sources of Conflict in Southern Africa c. 1800–1830: The ‘Mfecane’ Reconsidered,” in Carolyn Hamilton, ed., *Mfecane Aftermath*, chapter 5, 123–61; Simon Hall, “Archaeological Indicators for Stress in the Western Transvaal,” chapter 11, in Carolyn Hamilton, ed., *Mfecane Aftermath*, 312–3; Joaquim Lino da Silva, “O Zea mays e os milhos africanos na costa oriental da Africa. Discussao em torno de documentos antigos,” *Garcia de Orta, Serie de Geografia* (Lisbon), 14, 1 & 2 (1993), 15–40.

⁸⁶ Jan Boeyens and Simon Hall, “Tlokwa Oral Traditions and the Interface between History and Archaeology at Marothodi,” *South African Historical Journal*, 61, 3 (2009), 457–81; George M. Theal, *Basotholand Records, Vol. 1, 1832 to 1852* (Cape Town: W. A. Richards, 1883), 13.

⁸⁷ Cf. Etherington, *Great Treks*, 148, n1 on “Mantatees.”

stations. Young men clustered around ambitious chiefs-in-the-making, such as Sefunelo, Moletsane, Sekwati, and Sebitwane, who began as peers. Sebitwane drew on a maternal connection to the great Chief Moshoeshe's crocodile-people senior, a man named Makhetha, to become a chief, but he commanded his men on their razzias under the name of his favorite wife, "Kololo's Mother," or MmaKololo. His ad hoc polity brought men in from near-destroyed villages and chiefdoms. The people of MmaKololo eventually trekked up through the Okavango Delta in Northwest Botswana, headed all the way to the Kafue River in Zambia.⁸⁸

A chief did not need to have come from a "horde" nor a provisional matriarchy to achieve greatness. Mzilikazi's chiefdom, later termed "Ndebele," but first known as *Matabele* or *Matebele* like a long line of other eastern-origin invaders in southern Africa, was never part of a displaced mass. Stemming from a northern military command of the amalgamating Zulu state, Mzilikazi created a mobile capital which eventually ruled over a largely Sechuana-speaking infrastructure in the Transvaal, calling his own court "Zulu." Despite his ferocious reputation his dominion did not differ greatly from other highveld kingdoms, and in comparison, the similar Zulu-domain offshoot regime called Gaza in Mozambique appears to have been a tyranny.

Overall, and in agreement with recent reconsiderations, it seems fair to say that the early nineteenth century on the highveld witnessed rapid social and political mobilizations, with unprecedented violence only during the year or two of true famine, 1822 and 1823. "As for the rest of the hungry horde, the record is practically silent after 1823," concludes Norman Etherington in a recent study. Etherington suggests that some chiefs found it useful to feed the colonial expectation of savagery and horror for their own ends. On the other hand, violence did continue, and some chiefs said they "lived for raiding" into the 1850s.⁸⁹ The highveld was home to *sporadic* warfare long after Difaqane ended.

Even the particular trauma of the Difaqane, however, has not yet been grasped in its entirety by historians. The battle of Dithakong may have been inflated in importance, but not because nothing happened there; rather, because worse may well have happened at Khunwane, Kanye, Mashowe, Makgwareng, Kaditshwene (Kurrechane), and at other places, where no letter-writer like Robert Moffat took part. The missionaries to the highveld were but a handful of observers in an area the size of southern California, and Broadbent and Hodgson missed even major events in their own back yard. Sefunelo had seventeen scars cut into his chest for the seventeen men he had personally slain, not one of them in the missionaries' presence. The chief was

⁸⁸ See Neil Parsons, *A New History of Southern Africa* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 74.

⁸⁹ R. Kent Rasmussen, *Migrant Kingdom: Mzilikazi's Ndebele in South Africa* (London: Rex Collings, and Cape Town: David Philip, 1978); Elizabeth MacGonagle, "Living with a Tyrant: Ndau Memories and Identities in the Shadow of Ngungunyana," *International Journal of African History Studies*, 41, 1 (2008), 29–53; Etherington, *The Great Treks*, 24, and *passim*, and Parsons, "Prelude to the Difaqane," in Hamilton, ed., *Mfecane Aftermath*, 335; raiding: e.g., Vivien Ellenberger, "History of the Ba-Ga-Malete of Ramoutsa," *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa* 25 (1937), 1–72.

said to have seven “brothers” in the field, whether full or half or classificatory is unknown, but the missionaries encountered only two of them. Literate observers had at best a partial view of the action.

Agreeing with recent scholarship that “tribes” were not the era’s main actors in the violence of the 1810s and 1820s, one might suggest further that *young men* in general were. Chiefs were a self-composing stratum of undeniable importance. Under them, however, the axes of gender and age determined popular participation in the violence and long treks of the 1820s, far more than ethnic group or regional base, more than a fighter’s registration in a particular cohort of royal heirs. The same was true well into the middle of the century. Unmarried or recently married men took matters in hand.

Finding evidence for this view is not difficult. Most travelers noted that old women suffered disproportionately in the early 1820s.⁹⁰ It was certainly a time on the highveld of suffering for the weak, of people breaking their promises to care for the old, the disabled, the very young. David Livingstone had a plate engraved of his rescue of an infirm woman left for dead. There was an accepted way for a man to renounce his wife and family before leaving on a long campaign, a kind of unilateral divorce. Correspondingly, writes Eldredge, “the right of men to abduct women without regard for their wishes seems to have been taken for granted.” Young men chanted that they sought “cattle only, *and land!* cattle only, *and land!*,” but they also called women “hornless cattle,” stole them away, and raped them.⁹¹

Consider the famous ploy of the women of MmaNtathisi’s “town,” such as it was, who, with their husbands and brothers away stealing chief Mpangazitha’s cattle, faced an invading force of Mpangazitha’s men. The regiment approached from some distance from the east in the dawn light. The women quickly paraded out onto a ridge with their hoes glinting in the early sun, fooling Mpangazitha into thinking they were men clutching their spears. The invaders deviated and retreated. This was an inspired gambit, but could anything better make the point that men, not tribes, made war?⁹²

⁹⁰ Abandoned wives: Campbell, *Travels* [1816], 194–5, and Burchell, *Travels*, 316, also cited by Kinsman, “Beasts,” 52. Old women left to perish: LMS, S.A. corr., fiche 75 A, Moffat, Vrede Berg, August 20, 1818. Death of children and aged elicits no concern: Broadbent ms., “Reminiscences,” August 16, 1823, and as cited in context above. Father-son conflict: Paul Landau, *The Realm of the Word: Language, Gender, and Christianity in a Southern African Kingdom* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1995), chapter 1; and Moffat in Schapera, ed., *Apprenticeship*, April 26, 1822 (Tousan–Ngwaketse). For Isaac Schapera, see chapter 6 this volume.

⁹¹ Elizabeth Eldredge, *A South African Kingdom: The Pursuit of Security in Nineteenth-Century Lesotho* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 137, and 33: called *tshopya* by “Kgatlra raiders.” According to Marc Epprecht, *Hungouchani: History of a Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa* (McGill: Queens, 2004), 54, relatedly, coteries of men preparing for battle in southern Africa had sex with one another. In a perhaps displaced reference to the wife-taking in the 1840s, S. M. Molema recorded in *Monstshiwa, 1815–1896* (Cape Town: Struik, 1966), 31, that “elopement was in vogue in Tswana high society in those days.”

⁹² Jeff Guy, “Gender Oppression in South Africa’s Precapitalist Societies,” *Women and Gender in South Africa to 1945*, ed. Cheryl Walker (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990), 33–47.

The year 1823 was a famine year. Evidence from other famines in Africa offer an indication of how men likely behaved. According to Elias Mandala in his study of hunger and food crises in Malawi, want came in several well-understood forms, but a true crisis broke apart community ties. Relying on David Livingstone's 1860s Malawian letters, Mandala shows how unlike hunger (*njala*), the crisis of real famine (*chaola*) brought food shortages together with the breakdown of accepted rights and obligations, rendering succoring institutions useless. In her study of Malawi, Megan Vaughn similarly showed that when the situation turned grim, men abandoned their farms and fled to other places, drawing on wider ties, even if their presence at home would have kept them and their extended households alive (if just barely). Widespread shortages threw men into a gendered emergency mode well before the point of starvation, and they guarded remaining oases of plenty amid widening deserts of famine.⁹³

In 1823 in South Africa, young men effectively removed food stores from women's control. Normally on the highveld and throughout most of southern, central, and east Africa, women grew and harvested food crops, and women controlled the resulting output. Women produced staple foods for their households and beer to celebrate the harvest. While they have been seen sometimes as "beasts of burden" in southern Africa, highveld women could often own cattle, and mothers wielded considerable power. A man's "wife's mother" typically held in her bin the grain from "his wife's fields," as highveld men liked to say, both food grain and next year's seed.⁹⁴ Not, however, in 1823: if there was any sorghum to be had, young men (of alien militias) burgled it and kept it for themselves, along with the cattle they stole.

Many youthful raiders themselves kept their four-legged booty.⁹⁵ That much is apparent from Broadbent's account of his intervention in the people-of-Seleka regiments' plan to steal back the cattle of the hapless crocodile society chiefdoms. Either by taking cattle or by getting redistributed beasts according to their performance on the battlefield, men made themselves more powerful. Cattle, the basis of built followings and men's prestige, might then become "ancestors" to them. This is why men sang heroic songs to cows and to past

A few women managed to benefit from such events: see Marc Epprecht, "*This Matter of Women Is Getting Very Bad*": *Gender, Development and Politics in Colonial Lesotho* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2000), Introduction and 48.

⁹³ Elias Mandala, *The End of Chidyerano: A History of Food and Everyday Life in Malawi, 1860–2004* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2005), 32, 36, 66, 124; "oases of plenty" and "deserts" of hunger are his locutions; and Megan Vaughn, *The Story of An African Famine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 21; and Julie Livingston, *Debility and the Moral Imagination in Botswana* (Bloomington: Illinois University Press, 2005), 109, who also cites Vaughn; and Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983 [1981]).

⁹⁴ Personal observation of a rural wedding in Tswapong Hills (Ratholo), July 1990.

⁹⁵ E.g., "Mokgoywe's sons were Pooe-a-Mokgoywe, Pooenyane, and Mmolotsi of the first house, and Modingwane of the second house." Pooe allied with Modingwane: the same age regiment. Ellenberger, "History of the Ba-Ga-Malete," 37.

chiefs, and to no one else. In his own town, Moshoeshoe, the great nation-builder, was only a first among near-equal captains: "These men ... there is not one of them who would not laugh me to scorn if I sought to compel him to draw water for me," he said.⁹⁶ He ruled because he managed his men's interests.

MmaNtathisi's soldiers won cattle for her, and so did Sebitwane's men for his wife MmaKololo's glory; other female regents appear in the hazy middle period of some highveld oral traditions. These women were placeholders over unrankable alliances of opportunistic men, who had not been circumcised together, who agreed upon no common past male chief or ancestor, yet who wished to take wealth together. As long as cattle were being busily accumulated, sometimes a woman could unite factions more effectively than any existing man or ancient paternal ancestor's name. But those successful men's alliances pursued men's aggressive policies, no matter who stood as the titular leader. In one praise of MmaNtathisi, it was sung, or recited, that she forced her warriors to feed their wives and children. Thus an alternative is indicated: they might have let them starve!⁹⁷

Highveld society journeyed through periods of crises and hypermasculinized conduct before returning to a more approachable, peacetime form of patriarchy. But in peacetime, we must note, women were normally debarred from the central political court or kraal. In national emergencies they might come to chant at the chief or flash their sex at him to shame him, but the court and the court's cattle-connected centrality established the governing order, enforced at men's will. Consider the "traditional" denouement of a highveld initiation society, that of the monkey totem (people of *kgatla*) in Botswana. The previously circumcised cohort, elder brothers and friends of prime fighting age, were to run from the lodges into the villages, cursing, chasing all the women from their yards, dousing their fires, breaking their pots if they could, and driving the last of them back inside the sleeping rondavels, all the while chanting the "traditional" mantra: "Those who are being killed! Those who are being killed!" This was the essential drama of becoming a socialized man: attacking one's own sisters and mothers.⁹⁸ Only then could the newly minted age-grade come home.

GENDER AND WARFARE IN 1822-4

One begins to see that male political space, in its association with penned cattle and transhumance, ancestry and alliances, and chiefs, maintained an independent status over and above farmlands, homes, yards, and everyone

⁹⁶ Germond, ed., *Chronicles*, 516, cited by John Iliffe, *Honour in African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 148.

⁹⁷ Etherington, *Great Treks*, 148 ff.

⁹⁸ W. C. Willoughby, *Race Problems in the New Africa: A Study of the Relation of Bantu and Britons in Those Parts of Bantu Africa which Are under British Control* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), 134.

in them. Men's identities were portable and durable; women's were not. Men could colonize new country in regimental form and organize their settlements there, and women could not. This is what gave the social breakdown of the worst years of the 1820s its character. Men could strategize beyond their existing domestic arrangements, while women were left feeding their dwindling supplies of mashed sorghum (*bogobe*) to their children and in-laws. In this vein, is it relevant, in 1834, that Moshoeshoe murdered one of his wives? That Sefunelo's senior wife tried to strangle him with a length of beads, letting go only because she thought he was dead?⁹⁹

Last, to return to a point hinted earlier in this chapter: the men involved in the violence on the highveld were produced by inherent instabilities in highveld settlements. The leading public actors of the day were the sons and grandsons of great junior houses, or lords (*dikgosana*). The *centre ville* areas required their virtual "shaking-out." The lords' houses were not descended from the chief or any of his recent forefathers but from an ancestor many generations ago: their people had had time to multiply and increase, and their numbers were inversely proportional to the closer supporters of the chief. Streams of them therefore made themselves available to other chiefs and better alliances. Open highveld terrain meant new beginnings; and because men had been killing one another, in some places, so successfully, a surplus of marriageable women often awaited them. From the point of view of a *successful* chiefdom, the outward effluvia of lords – royal-cousin, junior-house chiefs, and their dependents – was overmatched by incoming foreign yet mostly "same-speaking" (*bechuana*) households, previously unranked, entering at the chief's or chiefs' discretion. Times of crisis were times of opportunity for some. Into this mix, then, came the métis mounted men with guns, their desire for female and underage labor, and their fickle, distant colonial allies.¹⁰⁰

So far we have taken a look at the politics and polities at the start of the nineteenth century. We note the prominence of past chiefs or ancestors, twin courts, and men's alliances, giving rise to different forms of association in peaceful times than in war. Ethnic differences existed, but chiefly politics made and remade ethnicity, not the other way around. The next chapter traces the shape of ordinary South Africans' political engagement moving from the deep southern African past. Highveld farmers' so-called tribes were not ancient, but their ways of thinking about community were.

⁹⁹ SAL, MSC 39/13 Bks. 7 to 12, Hodgson, April 22, 1823; and Peter Sanders, *Moshoeshoe, Chief of the Sotho* (Hanover, N.H.: Heinemann, 1975), 50, and Eldredge, *South African Kingdom*, 136; cf. incidences of violence in Pule Phoofolo, "Marital Litigation in Early Colonial Lesotho, 1870–1900," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 98/99 (2007), 671–703.

¹⁰⁰ Eldredge in Eldredge and Morton, *Slavery in South Africa*.

History before Tribes (Partnership, alliance, and power)

One comes without much notice upon the ruin of Great Zimbabwe. Its apparent volume is washed in shadow, inconspicuous at a distance like the breeze-block storefronts of Masvingo, the nearest town; but as one approaches, there suddenly is its curved, looming edifice, in coursed, gray granite bricks, mottled in orange lichen. No mortar lies between the rectangular stones. The outer wall is built thick as a schoolbus and ten meters high; at the top, there is a delicate chevron pattern. The main structures in stone date from the fourteenth century.

The immediate surrounding area is laced with low stone walling, the skeletal remains of a thriving urban zone. Once, the whole neighborhood was teeming with people, living in wide, thatched rondavels of red earth and manure.¹ The archaeologist T. N. Huffman, drawing on the historian David Beach's work, has subjected the site to the most ambitious and thorough analysis. The critical invention at Great Zimbabwe, according to this pioneering scholar, was to pattern popular loyalty repeatedly with age-grade initiation ceremonies, featuring circumcision. Huffman argues that the central stone enclosure was a gendered, sacred space, and that religious ceremonies gave it its subjective power.² Against this interpretation, it has been noted that none of the early Portuguese sources for the Zimbabwean highlands mention male initiation schools or genital circumcision, which were certainly known on the South African highveld. Even more, the attribution of religious power to polities of the past should not so easily be accepted. After all, "belief" is always why people are thought to cohere.³

¹ Graham Connah, "A Question of Economic Basis: Great Zimbabwe and Related Sites," *African Civilizations: Precolonial Cities and States in Tropical Africa: An Archaeological Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 184.

² T. N. Huffman, "Expressive Space in the Zimbabwe Culture," *Man N.S.* 19, abstract on p. 593; David Beach, "Cognitive Archaeology and Imaginary History at Great Zimbabwe," *Current Anthropology*, 39, 1 (1998), 47–60; Chapurukha Kusimba, *Rise and Fall of the Swahili States* (London: Sage, 1999), and Felix Chami and Gilbert Pwiti, *Southern Africa and the Swahili World* (Dar: Dar University Press, and Oxford: African Bishop's College, 2002).

³ See Chapter 3, this volume; Martinus L. Daneel, *The God of the Matopo Hills: An Essay on the Mwari Cult in Rhodesia* (Leiden: Africa-Studiecentrum, 1970), and David Beach, "Great Zimbabwe as a Mwari Cult Center," *Rhodesian Prehistory*, 11 (December 1973), 11–13.



FIGURE 2.1. Great Zimbabwe: The famous World Heritage Site stone ruins near Masvingo, Zimbabwe: the stone pillar. Photo by author.

Why did the settlement of Great Zimbabwe prosper? People lived in this space from early in the first millenium, but they grew wealthy only after the rise and fall of the important town of Mapungubwe, to the south. Beach has sketched a loose scenario for Great Zimbabwe's particular hegemonic growth by 1300 or so, adopting the word *torwa* to mean "unrelated members of an elite," who (he argues) comprised the government. The *torwa* of men, as they had at Mapungubwe, moved with a "favored son" to a hill, and there-upon orchestrated the norms of their rule. They left their cattle outside the settlement, and they taxed the trade around them from their elevated center. Huffman argues that the decentralization of the elite's cattle to faraway smaller centers corresponded directly to the *torwa*'s success, the ascent of opportunistic but unrelated rulers who did not place so great an emphasis on inherited wealth.⁴

⁴ Beach, "Cognitive Archaeology," and recent work, deemphasizes the "Arab wealth" element of Huffman, "The Rise and Fall of Zimbabwe," *Journal of African History*, 13 (1972), 353-66; Graham Connah, "A Question," in *African Civilizations*.

At the Great Zimbabwe main enclosure today, one presses forward into a dimple of convex, terraced stairs and enters a serpentine passageway. Farther inside, beyond the interior wall, near an intruding tree, is a column or tower as high as the walls, also of cool, roughly faced granite. Standing right against it, the curving circles of bricks create the impression of tremendous girth. Huffman views the stone tower as a feminine symbol of fertility and power, a stylized grain bin. The exaltation of feminine husbandry and the exile of cattle associates the site's plan, and the plan of related settlements exhibiting similar pottery and stonework, with a west-central African cultural pattern for Huffman, one very different from South African sites. One must also, however, summon the image of the soapstone Zimbabwe birds, surely a symbol of virile, predatory chiefship, which were perched atop the exterior walls and on another hillside wall a few hundred meters away. The birds, most likely eagles, bore oversize claws and blocky heads made to be easily understood from far below.

The Victorian Britons claimed that the site was part of their own ancient biblical, or Semitic and "historical," narrative, and dug it up and removed whatever artifacts they could.⁵ If one happens to be in Oxford, one can behold the birds in fine, as they were not meant to be seen; they are carved into the massive oaken newel posts anchoring the staircase to the landings at the Rhodes House Library.

The word *zimbabwe* meant stones, that is, a heap of them, which signified a "court, home, or grave" of a chief. The truth, however, is that no one knows what the site was called in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The history that is usually told of this time stresses the subjectivity of the ethnic group, *the Shona*, which is viewed as having developed in South Africa and Zimbabwe, but which cannot be shown to have existed as such in 1400. Morphologies of ceramics facies, as commonly interpreted by archaeologists, plot a zig-zagging course for them up onto the Zimbabwean plateau. A stream of migration is thereby called to mind, moving from the Leopard's Kopje pottery users north of the Limpopo River, to K-2 and Mapungubwe on the southern bank of the Limpopo and related towns, up to Great Zimbabwe on the Zimbabwean highlands.⁶ Only no such stream of people may have flowed.

⁵ See Henrika Kuklick, "Contested Monuments: The Politics of Archaeology in Southern Africa," in George Stocking, ed., *Colonial Situations: Essays on the Contextualization of Ethnographic Knowledge*. Vol. 7, *History of Anthropology* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 135–69.

⁶ Later involving the spread of "Luangwa-ware" from the West. T. N. Huffman, "Ceramics, Settlements and Late Iron Age Migrations," *African Archaeological Review*, 7 (1989), 155–82; Martin Hall, *Farmers, Kings, and Traders* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990; 1st ed., "The Changing Past," Cape Town: David Philip, 1987), 89, 91–116; Tim O'C. Maggs, *Iron Age Communities of the Southern Highveld* (Pietermaritzburg: Natal Museum, 1976); William Lye and Colin Murray, *Transformations on the Highveld: The Tswana and Southern Sotho* (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble Books, 1980); and see Paul Mayle, *A History of the Black People of South Africa* (London: Currey, 1989); Peter

Aside from Huffman's spatial reconstructions, Great Zimbabwe's stonework has been read in a more prosaic way. The granite bricks in their placements, examined for signs of increasing or decreasing levels of workmanship, tell a story of a gathering power and growing societal complexity. People built substantially in stone after AD 1250, and material workmanship improved fitfully in defined styles of coursing after that. Better walls surmounted older ones. The specialization evident in the heating, breaking, chipping, and placing of the sedimentary blocks improved. Perhaps the techniques achieved their apogee in the 1350s. At that time, an Indian Ocean-affiliated family of traders on the Swahili coast at Kilwa Kisimane, the so-called Shirazi dynasty, also achieved their greatest power. They built their own cut-stone palace at Husuni Kubwa; their Sultan, Hasan bin Sulaiman (1320–1333), appears on a coin unearthed along with other foreign artifacts at the Great Zimbabwe ruins.

Huffman and Beach consider that Great Zimbabwe indeed had such long-range connections and was quite powerful, and Huffman calls it the capital of an "extensive Shona empire."⁷ The archaeologist and art historian Peter Garlake on the other hand disagrees and feels that the influence of Great Zimbabwe has been overstated. He is agnostic about terming it "Shona," and he surmises that many other centers shared the landscape around it.

THE CENTRAL CATTLE PLAN (CP) AND ZIMBABWE PLAN (ZP)

For Huffman, the layout of Great Zimbabwe reveals an unprecedented complexity in past political behavior. He extends this reading to contemporaneous and later sites of highland power, such as Khami, Danangombe, and other old settlements. He discerns a common layout among them in which cattle were not kept at their centers. He calls this the Zimbabwe Plan, or ZP. Ordinary southern African Iron Age towns belonged to a parent category, designated by the generic label, the Central Cattle Plan, or Cattle Plan, or CP for the sake of convenience. CP sites stayed apparently the same over the eons, while, for Huffman, the ZP pattern proliferated with Shona-speakers in the post-1400 environment. The CP is a generic designation. It includes the highveld-style towns discussed in the first chapter and others before them. In fact, the CP designates every non-ZP southern African town from at least the start of the Iron Age to recent times, many still thriving in the present day.

A great many of these CP sites have been mapped. A concentration of hardened kraal manure, sometimes to a depth of four meters, allows them to be spotted from the air. Vitrified dung permanently alters the landscape, encouraging the growth of a reflective grass, *Cenchrus ciliaris*, as a maximal vegetation. Dated to well before Great Zimbabwe and the ZP pattern of settlement,

Garlake, *Early Art and Architecture of Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); and D. N. Beach, *The Shona and Their Neighbors* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 82.

⁷ Beach, "Cognitive," 59; Peter Garlake, "An Investigation of Manekweni, Mozambique," *Azania*, 11 (1976), 25–47.

the earlier CP sites, like the later CP sites, are ipso facto about cattle. They are trampled manure centers and satellites, and satellites of satellites similarly marked, the main kraal or livestock pen imagined as lying at the heart of the polity.

The overlap of the chief's court (*kgotla*) and cattle fold, in the middle of CP sites, is certainly significant. It helped produce ideas about stewardship, joining-the-herd, and material increase, as definitional elements of the common good. But the situation was more varied and volatile than the regular husbanding of cattle suggests. Scholars have been too quick to read bovine-centered sites as individuated entities. The result has been to turn the CP or the Central Cattle Plan into a marker of tribal organization, and by reverse logic to credit the innovations of the ZP as *sui generis*.

According to Beach and Huffman, the ZP arose as the only great differentiation among the masses of CP settlements. In the many ZP towns, not only did the kraal lie far away from the men's court but there was also a complex and differentiated center hosting the torwa and other gendered institutions. The implication is that the ZP broke with a far simpler tradition. According to David Beach, who agrees with Huffman here, the result was not as rule-bound or repeatable an administrative system as one found farther south. For as Beach tells us, ZP dwellers, the Shona, were flexible in how they "call[ed] themselves," with "no very rigid system" among them. "Readers may now understand why Bantustan tribalism [under Apartheid] never quite took off in Rhodesia," Beach suggests. Perhaps, however, Beach himself was partly responsible for this happy failure, as his typologies are singular and of limited duration. Indeed, the Shona story is fairly *constituted* by ornate and untranslated regional political vocabularies in Beach's account. "One family of forerunners was that of the Rundwe – allegedly from the Zambesi Valley near Chirundu – under Nechipani *zhou/siwani*," runs a not-atypical passage. "His Nemarundwe dynasty arrived in the Pokoteke Valley opposite Gurajena, and found Dewe *shumba* and Chikede *gumbo* on Manyora and Bara hills and drove them away."⁸ Beach elsewhere remarks, apparently without irony: "the [Rhodesian] government never understood these terms well enough to try to use them."⁹

Compared to this Shona ZP, dynastic and specific, and untranslatable, the ubiquitous CP style was and is a model of transparency, apparently a simple fractal continuation of the domestic principle, producing interchangeable tribes. South African pottery sequences show great shifts around 800 to 1000 AD, indicating an introduction of people and ideas from the Great Lakes region in east-central Africa (the Nkope branch of Urewe-ware facies): yet the CP continued. The settlement at Ndondondwane toward the grasslands' coast, which decorated its pottery in one way before about AD 900 and differently afterward; Rooikrans, Shoshong, and Makgwareng – all remained

⁸ D. N. Beach, *A Zimbabwean Past: Shona Dynastic Histories and Oral Traditions* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1994), 145.

⁹ Beach, *The Shona and Their Neighbors*, 31–2: The full stop is added.

CP sites, over and through societal discontinuities, marked by ceramics and otherwise, fore and aft of the ZP: no other style emerged. The CP is this capacious because it registers cattle manure in the middle, nothing more. It says little about politics or history, and should not be understood otherwise.¹⁰

The containment of the gold trade, the attraction of goods, and the maintenance of massive herds of healthy cattle all played a role in bringing about Great Zimbabwe's dominance. Traders connected up with one another through the Okavango inland delta to Feti, a contemporary center in central Angola. Great Zimbabwe was much more a part of southern Africa's general history than some of its scholars have implied.¹¹ It should not so quickly be abstracted from southern Africa as an insular Shona achievement; nor did CP dwellers live the simple or ethnically circumscribed lives that a dualist model suggests.¹²

THE S-GROUP BANTU-SPEAKERS

Understanding that tribes or ethnic groups had no recognizable ancient corollaries does not mean there are not *other*, real, ancient continuities, stemming from a common heritage and history. The word *bantu* (*batho*, *abantu*, etc.) means people; "Bantu" refers linguistically to a grouping of languages related to the diverse speech of the wider Niger-Congo language family centered in West Africa. Bantu languages grew first in west-central Africa, then in the central Sudanic belt, then in the Great Lakes region. They subsequently expanded in sub-Saharan Africa more generally, cascading down littorals, reversing, advancing, and eventually coming to account for the vast bulk of the

¹⁰ See Paul J. Lane, "Barbarous Tribes and Unrewarding Gyration? The Changing Role of Ethnographic Imagination in African Archaeology," in Ann Brower Stahl, ed., *African Archaeology: A Critical Introduction* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2005), 32–3.

¹¹ T. N. Huffman, *Snakes and Crocodiles* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1996). Cf. Wyatt MacGaffey, "Changing Representations in Central African History," *Journal of African History*, 46, 1 (2005), 1–26; Beach, *The Shona and Their Neighbors*, 6, 82, 93; Beach, "Cognitive," 59; Garlake, "Excavations at the 17th Century Portuguese Site of Danbaran, Rhodesia," *Proceedings and Transactions of the Rhodesia Scientific Association*, 54, 1 (1969), 23–61; G. Barker, "Economic Models for the Manekweni Zimbabwe," *Azania*, 13 (1978), 71–100; and K. R. Robinson, *Khami Ruins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959). For critical Portuguese sources, see G. M. Theal, *Records of South-Eastern Africa*, 9 vols. (1898–1903), and for 1497–1615, *Documentos Sobre os Portugueses em Mozambique e na Africa Central*, 9 vols. with full English translation (Lisbon: 1962–89); and Jan Vansina, *How Societies Are Born: Governance in West Central Africa before 1600* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), for Feti.

¹² Huffman's recent, masterful textbook, *Handbook to the Iron Age: The Archaeology of Precolonial Farming Societies in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2007), despite disclaimers (e.g. 108, 321), presents a model of genetic diffusion, under-valuing emulation, amalgamation, and creativity. Noting the scant population in previous centuries in the region, he argues that Icon (Moloko)-ware settlements in the Limpopo-Soutpansberg region represent the ca. 1300 entrance of East African "Sotho-Tswana" as a whole. Even the best Venn diagram of morphological shifts in pottery motifs, however, need not indicate the transmission of whole cultural "packages" (343) or "cultural history units" – nor, surely, the vectors of entire populations (as Huffman otherwise notes, e.g. 67).

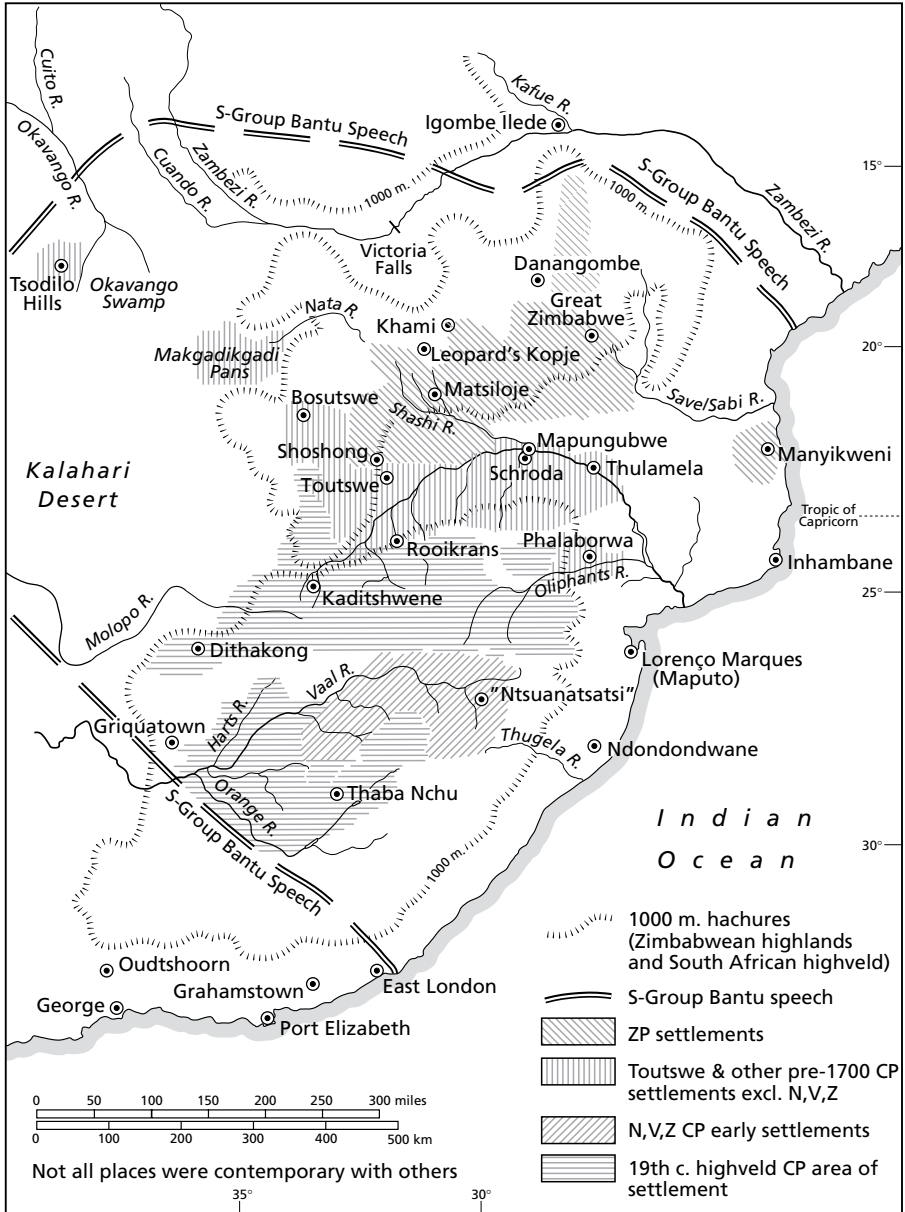


FIGURE 2.2. Map of S-group, and 1,000-m. lines in southern Africa, marking the highveld and the Zimbabwean highlands, with place names. Overlaps not shown. After a map drawn by author, using various sources, including Connah, "A Question of Economic Basis"; Denbow, "The Toutswe Tradition"; Huffman, *Handbook*; and Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto*.

languages spoken south of Lake Victoria's northernmost shores, and so also, in South Africa. Covering all southern Africa, in fact, is the single "S-group," according to the alphabetized (A through S) regions mapped by the modern linguist, Malcolm Guthrie. The S-group of southern Africa is the largest of Africa's relatively homogenous regions in the Bantu category.

The S-group speech area, in other words, is similar to other lettered areas in its internal homogeneity; yet it is geographically immense.¹³ Within it, Shona differs most from the other enumerated languages, yet it is very much one of them. Some of the S-group's internal similarity came from people's common heritage. Some of it came from residents' common interaction over time, a phenomenon linguists call "convergence."¹⁴ Overall, the size of the S-group tells us that the farmers of southern Africa were unusually interconnected in their speech and traditions over a wide area, just as much as any number of much smaller regions north of the Zambesi River. The whole of southern Africa was an area of common learning and mutual experience.¹⁵

"The House" is the name for a critical component of the S-group Bantu-speakers' political heritage. It indicates an ancient tradition of association, inheritance, and unity, at the root of all farmers' politics, embracing all their settlements. The House is indeed an institution of great antiquity: key elements of its vocabulary stem from the Cameroons grasslands at the beginning of Bantu-language dissemination and growth, some five thousand years ago. It involved and involves reciprocal rights in people, rather than land. It opened the possibility of settlement to immigrants willing to subordinate themselves to a ruling chief or an alliance of farmers and to alter their communal identities.

Various forms of the House developed with the differentiation of Bantu daughter languages throughout the continent, in savannah, forest, riverside, and lakeshore. The result was not always an autonomous entity. The House was, inter alia, the maternal segment, *ntlo* (*indlu* east of the Drakensberg), that is, the "hut" or rondavel; the household; the village and highveld town (*motse*, *umuzi* in the east). In none of these guises was the House a closed-door

¹³ Derek Gowlett, "The S-Group," in Derek Nurse and Gerard Philippon, eds., *The Bantu Languages* (London: Routledge, 2003). The S.10 subgroup is Shona; S.20, Venda; S.30, Sotho-Tswana; S.40, Nguni; there are also Tshwa-Ronga and Copi divisions from Mozambique. An "outlier language," Makowa or Makua, is in northern Mozambique.

¹⁴ Christopher Ehret, "Writing African History from Linguistic Evidence," in John Edward Philips, *Writing African History* (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2005), 96–7.

¹⁵ See Sifree Makoni and Alastair Pennycook, "Disinventing and (Re)Constituting Languages," in *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 2 (2005), 3 (137–56), and Makoni and Pennycook, "The Modern Mission: The Language Effects of Christianity," *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 4, 2 (2005), 137–55; and Sifree Makoni, Geneva Smitherman, Arnetha F. Ball, and Arthur K. Spears, eds., *Black Linguistics: Language, Society, and Politics in Africa and the Americas* (London: Routledge, 2003); thanks to Julie Livingston; see Leroy Vail, ed., *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (London: Currey, 1989).

kin-group or ethnically homogeneous tribe. “Big men competed with each other to increase the size, the labor force, and the security of their houses,” Jan Vansina writes of the first Bantu millennium in the equatorial rainforests. The House’s vocabulary created both kingdoms and highly localized, agrarian systems of rule, and even gender-organized “partnerships” in the non-Bantu-speaking eastern Congo, between farmers and pygmies.¹⁶

Among farmers and herders of the South African highveld, the House created the Central Cattle Plan (CP) of settlement, broadly speaking, inasmuch as it transformed into all South African solutions.¹⁷ People developed their controlling ideas in situ, interacting with others around them. Bantu-speakers lived on the Oodi River (a Limpopo feeder) already in the fourth century AD; their “Eiland” pottery is an antecedent to the dominant later CP pottery of the highveld called “Moloko”-ware.¹⁸ They smelted iron at a trading center, Broederstroom, by the fifth century, where many kinds of people must have visited. Bantu-speaking centers drew people inward, clustering at forges, medical cults, markets, and in the service of successful chiefs.¹⁹ Over centuries, the climate grew necessarily more hospitable, wetter and cooler, and Bantu-speakers out-produced everyone else in sorghum and millet. Sometimes Bantu-speaking farmers abandoned farming and learned Khoe ways; Damara-speakers have big bodies and dark skin, and Damara is a Khoe tongue. Mostly, however, it was Khoe-speaking people, and “Bushmen” – “San,” the modern synonym, appears to have first been a term of abuse akin to “Beggar!” – who flocked to the Bantu-speakers’ agrarian towns; they came as wives and dependents, household heads, and subordinate chiefs.²⁰

¹⁶ E.g., see Richard Roy Grinker, *Houses in the Rainforest* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), discussing Sudanic Lese and Efe; Ron Elgash, *African Fractals: Modern Computing and Indigenous Design* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 29; Jan Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest: Towards a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), conclusion; and (quotes) Vansina, “Pathways of Political Development in Equatorial Africa and Neo-Evolutionary Theory,” in Susan Keech McIntosh, ed., *Beyond Chiefdoms: Pathways to Complexity in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 166–72; Christopher Ehret and Vansina differ; see Christopher Ehret, *An African Classical Age: Eastern and Southern Africa in World History, ca. 1000 BC to 400 AD* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998), 151–4, especially discussing the proposed roots *jubo and *jo which descends to *ntlo* (hut), 151–4.

¹⁷ Richard Roy Grinker, *Houses in the Rainforest*; CCP or CP: Adam Kuper, *Wives for Cattle: Bridewealth and Marriage in Southern Africa* (London: Routledge, 1982), 140–56, and T. N. Huffman, “Archaeology and Ethnohistory of the African Iron Age,” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 11 (1982), 133–50; Neil Parsons, “Time of Troubles: Difaqane in the Interior,” 301, and Parsons, “Prelude to the Difaqane in the Interior of Southern Africa c. 1600–c. 1822,” chapter 12, in Carolyn Hamilton, ed., *The Mfecane Aftermath*.

¹⁸ Martin Hall, *Farmers*, for a relevant critique (13–17); R. J. Mason, “Oori or Moloko? The Origins of the Sotho-Tswana on the Evidence of the Late Iron Age of the Transvaal,” *South African Journal of Science*, 79 (1983), 261; cf. Beach, *The Shona*, “Theories of Origins,” 32–6.

¹⁹ Jan Vansina, “Linguistic Evidence for Ironworking in Bantu-Speaking Africa,” *History in Africa* 33 (2006), 321–61.

²⁰ See, e.g., H. J. Banelt and P. Forster, “Reply,” esp. “Reduced Median Network of !Kung-motif Lineages,” *American Journal of Human Genetics*, 61 (1997), 982; see also Banelt

Helping to connect people from different courts and distant regions of the country were totemic icons. The earliest of the totemic associations on the South African highveld referenced animals of wetter environments, those familiar to forest- and riverine-dwellers to the north, including the snake, hippo, crocodile, and baboon.²¹ They are probably very old. “Kgatla” chiefdoms “honor” the *kgabo*, a “tan monkey,” and one sense of *kgatla* (and *kgatlha*) is a “yellowish monkey,” so it might be considered in the same vein.²² The word “totem” itself is a translation of the noun corresponding to “to praise” (*seboko*, from *go boka*), a synonym for which is “to dance.” Totems were patrilineal, and men (not women) *danced*, as warriors, in spectacles in villages and towns, at funerals, initiations, and other celebrations.²³ And danced totems, like chiefly allegiances, could be switched.

From around 600 to 1300, Toutswe, Bosutswe, and settlements near Shoshong developed as the “Toutswe-mogala” regional complex and flourished in that area, which is today creased by three borders, those of South Africa, Botswana, and Zimbabwe. The archaeologist James Denbow has shown that settlements dispersed their great cattle herds to smaller centers after 1200, most likely because they *had* to as a result of the erasure of local sustaining pastures; he has suggested that something similar may have occurred at Great Zimbabwe. Interestingly, at the important settlement of Bosutswe, Denbow

and Forster, *Annual Human Biology* 20, 5 (September–October 1993), 477–85; and H. J. Banelt, P. Forster, C. C. Sykes, and M. B. Richards, “Mitochondrial Portraits of Human Populations Using Median Networks,” *Genetics*, 141 (1995), 743–53; and H. Soodyall and T. Jenkins, “Mitochondrial DNA Polymorphisms in Negroid Populations from Namibia: New Light on the Origins of the Dama, Herero and Ambo” (Johannesburg: South African Institute for Medical Research, Department of Human Genetics), and Y. S. Chen, A. Olckers, et. al., “mTDNA Variation in the South African Kung and Khwe – and Their Genetic Relationships to Other African Populations,” *American Journal of Human Genetics*, 66, 4 (April, 2000), 1362–83. Cf. Antonio Salas et al., “The African Diaspora: Mitochondrial DNA and the Atlantic Slave Trade,” *American Journal of Human Genetics*, 74 (2004), 454–65.

²¹ Emile Durkheim’s discussion is still definitional: “Origin of the Idea of the Totemic Principle or Mana,” chapter 7, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Karen Fields (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), e.g., 206.

²² Fred Morton, “Perpetual Motion: Resettlement Patterns in the Western Transvaal and Southeastern Botswana since 1750,” *Historia*, 48 (2003), 265–82; Water: Vansina, *Paths*, 192, and cf. Robert Harms, *Games against Nature: A History of the Nunu of Equatorial Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); J. A. Louw and R. Finlayson, “Southern Bantu Origins as Represented by Xhosa and Tswana,” *South African Journal of Languages*, 10 (1990), 401–10; J. C. Vogel and A. Fuls, “The Spatial Distribution of Radiocarbon Dates for the Iron Age in Southern Africa,” *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, 54 (1999), 97–101.

²³ Isaac Schapera, *Melaô ya BaTswana* (Alice: Lovedale Press, 1940); C. Germond, ed., *Chronicles of Basutoland*, 88 (Lemue: Mosega, 1832; Rolland, 1832; Lemue, 1844); D. F. Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto*, 237 ff.; Isaac Schapera, *Praise Poems of Tswana Chiefs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), passim; Eugene Casalis, *Etudes sur la langue séchuana* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1841), 74 ff.; Norman Etherington, *The Great Treks: The Transformation of Southern Africa, 1815–1854* (London and New York: Pearson Education, 2001), 83, 163, 92.

and his colleagues found there had not been one dense concentration of cattle and people, but two of them. Because the sites lay only five kilometers apart and each contained about 50,000 square meters of glassified manure, he treated them as a single “Class 3” town of more than 100,000 square meters. But, in fact, at Bosutswe there was a twin court.

Based on more limited work at Schroda and nearby sites, John Calabrese has found something similar. He has discerned an interplay of two kinds of ceramics, Leopard’s Kopje (ZP) ware and Zhizo ware, and so presumably two “ethnic groups,” the interaction of which produced the characteristic Urewelocated ware of the period after roughly AD 1000.²⁴ For Bosutswe, Denbow has shown that when the leadership dispersed its herds in around 1200, the typical Zhizo-ware sequence in one center, the Central Precinct, was replaced by ZP-style wares (close in form to those of another town, Lose). In the other center, the Western Precinct, however, the old Zhizo ceramics were maintained for another century, until perhaps 1300. Bosutswe, like Schroda, may therefore have sheltered an ethnically and linguistically plural population in its heyday, a population resembling the people of the region today.²⁵ Perhaps ethnically diverse twin courts more generally assisted the construction of complex networks of power on the Zimbabwean plateau.²⁶

Something similar may well have been afoot in the expanding highveld towns of South Africa at their inception, too. For it was in the 1300s, during the period of Great Zimbabwe’s greatest wealth, that “Moloko-ware” sites appeared in the north, followed by villages and towns on the upper Vaal. A wave of stone-building swept over the farms and villages dotting the highveld. This wave moved across linguistic and ethnic spaces and transformed the use of existing totems. Among the feeder rivers of the Vaal and Rhenoster rivers in this period, according to the archaeologist Tim Maggs, the highveld farmers

²⁴ John Calabrese, “Ethnicity, Class, and Polity: The Emergence of Social and Political Complexity in the Shashi-Limpopo Valley of Southern Africa, AS 900 to 1300,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Witwatersrand, Geography, 2005; and see Peter Mitchell, *The Archaeology of Southern Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 267.

²⁵ Tom Güldemann, “New Directions in Historical Linguistics: Khoisan Classification and Early Population History in Southern Africa,” unpublished paper, University of Zurich and MPI-EVAN, Leipzig, May 12–14, 2008; Alan Barnard, *Hunters and Herders of Southern Africa: A Comparative Ethnography of the Khoisan Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); James Denbow, Jeannette Smith, Nonofho Mathibidi Ndobochani, Kiresten Atwood, and Duncan Miller, “Archaeological Excavations at Bosutswe, Botswana: Cultural Chronology, Paleo-Ecology and Economy,” *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 35, 2 (February 2008), 459–80; Denbow, “Material Culture and the Dialectics of Identity in the Kalahari: AD 700–1700,” chapter 9 in S. Keech McIntosh, ed., *Beyond Chiefdoms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 110–23; Denbow, “Finding Bosutswe: Archaeological Encounters with the Past,” *History in Africa*, 35 (2008), 145–90.

²⁶ Nikolas van der Merwe and Robert Scully, “The Phalaborwa Story: Archaeological and Ethnographic Investigation of a South African Iron Age Group,” *World Archaeology*, 3, 2 (1971), 178–96, but also Donald Mookodi, “Settlement and Land Use between the 11th and 17th Centuries in Eastern Botswana,” *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies*, 15, 1 (2001), 91–107; Denbow, “Material Culture,” 110.

founded “complex patterns of populating, migrating, and acculturating,” producing corbelled stone-base walling around their yards and in their rondavels: the so-called type N towns. By the later 1500s, their various associations ranked aspirant chiefs building heterogeneous chiefdoms in multi-generational capitals. The people constructed situational forms of servitude, caste, and trade-statuses, involving Khoe- and San-language speakers, and Bantu-speakers, in various and gendered permutations. The highveld way of life increased their numbers.²⁷

THE ROZVI AND SOUTH AFRICA

Major chiefdoms, or dynasties as David Beach prefers to call them, arose in the shadow of Great Zimbabwe and then grew in number during and after its ecological collapse, early in the 1500s. The recognizable ZP style proliferated over the Zimbabwean highlands and beyond; even a site in eastern Mozambique (Manyikweni), far from Great Zimbabwe, shows its characteristic, rich material culture. In the north, the powerful *Mwene* Mutapa’s (Chief Mutapa’s) domain perpetuated the ZP tradition and grew very wealthy; in the south, the state of “Butua,” as some called it, came to power in the ZP mode. A satellite of Great Zimbabwe, Tsindi, hosted the rise of a “Changamire Dynasty,” presumably still within the dominion of this same Butua state.

More trade flowed northward (to Quelimane) than to southern coastal ports by the end of the 1500s, but still something like 200 kilograms of southern Zimbabwean gold per year left Mozambique along the Save (Sabe) River. Beach refers to the Butua state as the “Torwa” (*torwa*) state, using the same word he used for the unrelated ruling party that he suggests first created Great Zimbabwe. Now Torwa is capitalized. Being Changamire, per se, came to mean dancing or praising the human heart, the totem that also indicated the dynasts who built their settlements on the Save: the Rozvi.

It was in the era during which the Rozvi states north of the Limpopo flourished that the highveld’s stone towns also developed, taking the characteristic forms that people inhabited in the nineteenth century. In this second round (post-1400) of construction, defensive fortifications played a larger part. Stonework meant more permanent and prized settlements, such as those at Thulamela and several along the Marico River. The new type-V settlements (identified by Maggs), often with fortified walls, appeared at this time. The evolving commercial environment in the seventeenth century was familiar with enslavement and also, possibly, elements of Islam. In the Zimbabwean highlands, in 1644, the Portuguese sacked the ZP capital town of Khami, and the Torwa (or torwa)

²⁷ Bantu-speaking women rarely married into Khoe-speaking (Korana, Nama, etc.) wards. Richard Elphick, *Khoikhoi and the Founding of South Africa* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1980), and Shula Marks, “Khoisan Resistance to the Dutch in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” *Journal of African History*, 13, 1 (1972), 55–80; !Kung is a misusage in M. L. Pratt’s *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 63 ff.

shifted to Danangombe. This may or may not have proliferated the people called Rozvi.²⁸ South of the Limpopo, by the later 1600s, South African farmers were familiar with most all of the colonizable, arable land lying a thousand or even 1,200 meters above sea level. Many of them adopted imported American maize and used it to expand their settlements and their populations.²⁹

We do not know much about the next few generations on the highveld; but much later, at the end of the nineteenth century north of the Molopo and Limpopo, a Rozvi elite still claimed the right to install new chiefs over a wide area. A presiding official proclaimed, "I am the Rozvi who stands here today."³⁰ This sounds very like the ceremonial stature recognized for the "BaHurutshe" of the highveld. Often called "the senior Tswana tribe" in the ethnic CP model, their history also extends at least back to the 1600s. South of the Limpopo, the first part of the Rozvi's statement, above, would most likely be "Ke morotzi," or perhaps (if far enough south) "ke mogarotse" (cf. *mohurutshe*), "I am he (or they are they) of the place of Roz[v]i." Words differed in their pronunciation across speech communities, even nearly adjacent ones. Thus "the place of Roz[v]i" appeared as Ga-rotse (alt. Ha-rotse) and Fhoo-Rotshe or Khoo-Rotshe, the latter two signifying distance (*foo* and *koo*). One finds Harootsi, Kurutse, and Fhurutshe recorded on the highveld before the synthesized and standardized name of the twentieth century, "Hurutshe" or "BaHurutshe," emerged as the "correct" spelling and became known as the parent tribe of the others.

In a list of thirty highveld "tribes" provided by Thomas Hodgson in 1823, the number 10 is "Bamarotsi." Is this the same as "Hurutshe"? Yes, it is. Burchell in 1812 offered Mōrūtzi, and Chief Mothibe, in 1813, told Campbell of the Marootze. Later, Andrew Smith in 1839 offered "Baarootzie," and elsewhere Smith says he heard "that all the Bechuanas were [once] governed by the Barootzi king" (*ba-rootzi*) and that circumcision began with the "Barootzie" [*sic*]. Rotse spoken in one place is Rootzi in another. Lichtenstein, a naturalist who prided himself on precise representation, wrote "Muchuruhzi" on his map, probably a rendition of mo (person) *goo rozi*. He located these people to the far north and they, with hardly more specificity possible, said their forebears came from north of that.

²⁸ Tue, 17 September 1996, 09:50:10 GMT H-Africa communication from Professor Anita Nettleton of Art History at the University of Witwatersrand; Jan C. Boeyens and D. T. Cole, "Kaditshwene, What's in a Name?" in *African Mosaic: Festschrift for JA Louw* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1999); Beach, *A Zimbabwean Past*, 83, 82 ("subject dynasties") and 125. Shona-speaking "Varemba" Muslims are noted in 1810. Cf. S. I. G. Mudenge, *A Political History of the Munhumutapa, c. 1400–1902* (London: James Currey, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988), passim; Elizabeth MacGonagle, *Crafting Identity in Zimbabwe and Mozambique* (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 40–2.

²⁹ Etherington, *The Great Treks*, makes this case; see my H-Africa review: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.cgi?path=165141074895253>; and James McCann, *Maize and Grace: Africa's Encounter with a New World Crop, 1500–2000* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006).

³⁰ Huffman, *Snakes*, 17.

On the highveld, *ga-* or *ha-rotse* (*rotse*-place) people instantiated the centralizing trend of the 1600s. Their supremacy is historical and recognized. The people of the crocodile and the tan monkey confirm *ha-rotse* seniority; the people-of-*rolong* said so, too. The *rotse*-place association was universally esteemed the oldest political designation.³¹

S-Group Bantu

<i>Shona</i>		varozvi ³²
<i>Sechuana</i>	[rotse or rozi people]	marotse ³³
		marootze ³⁴
		barotse ³⁵
		morutzies or mohutzies ³⁶
	[place-of-rotse or -rozi]	muchuruhzi ³⁷
		baarootze, barootzi ³⁸
		harootse and baharutse ³⁹
		hurutshe, khurutshe, fhurutshe ⁴⁰

³¹ Andrew Manson, “The Hurutshe and the Foundation of the Transvaal State,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 25, 1 (1992), 85–98, 52; Isaac Schapera, *Ditirafalo tsa Merafe ya Batswana ba Lefatshe la Tshiriletso* (Cape Town: Lovedale Press, 1940), 5; Schapera, *History of Bakgatla ba Kgafela* (Mochudi: Phuthadikobo Museum, 1980 [original publication 1942]), 34; South African Museum Library (SAM-L), Smith, Sir Andrew, 1797–1868, Smith folios, Vol. 12, “Memoranda A” (consisting of notes on highveld communities). *Barolong* is claimed to be most senior by Roger Massie, *The Tribes of the Transvaal* (London: Great Britain War Office, 1905), and a similar report from the Transvaal Native Affairs Department (1905), and in a genealogy supplied therein. The association between Hurutshe (“Harootsi”) and Rozvi has been suggested before (i.e., Douglas Elliot Charles Romaine Stirke, *Barotseland: Eight Years among the Barotse* [London: John Bale, n.d., and New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969], discusses it, 2, 41, 65), but abandoned because *descent*-linked connections could not be shown. Schapera, van Warmelo, and Breutz all suggest “Hurutshe” is the oldest form, and the others with fh and kh were “variants” (and ts with no aspiration substandard); and M. Mainga, “A History of Lozi Religion to the End of the Nineteenth Century,” in T. O. Ranger and Isariah Kimambo, eds., *The Historical Study of African Religion* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1972), 99–115, referencing material collected by Adolphe Jalla.

³² Beach, *A Zimbabwean Past*; see discussion above.

³³ South African Library (SAL), MSC 39/13, books 7–12, Thomas Hodgson, Thabeng, 7 April 1823.

³⁴ Chief Mothibe, in LMS, S.A. corr., Campbell, 5/2/D, Klaarwater, July 26, 1813, and John Campbell, *Travels in South Africa Undertaken at the Request of the London Missionary Society, Being a Second Journey into the Interior of That Country*, 2 vols. (London: LMS/Francis Wesley, 1822), 126: 1830, “ancient Marootzee nation.”

³⁵ Sebitwane, ca. 1835, according to various secondary sources.

³⁶ John William Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa 1822–24*, 2 vols. (London: Longman, Hurst, 1824; reprinted New York: Johnson Reprint, 1967), Vol. 2, 376–7: 1812.

³⁷ Hinrich Lichtenstein, *Foundation of the Cape* [and] *About the Bechuanas*, ed. and trans. Otto Spohr (Cape Town: Balkema, 1973 [originally published 1807]).

³⁸ SAM-L, Andrew Smith, “Memoranda A,” 1839–41.

³⁹ Cory Library (“Cory”), Grahamstown, Diary of Francis Owen, 1839.

⁴⁰ Middle to late nineteenth-century standardizations.

Most likely Rozvi (*rozvi*) is the initial template for this *rutzi*, *rubzi*, *rotse*, and so on, on the highveld. There may also, however, be a loan-term behind all three that we do not know. Folk etymology on the highveld points to the melons of the first fruits ceremonies, *marotse*. In some areas *rotse* is a verb in the perfect form meaning to have unloaded a burden or a present. In Shona, “Rozvi” may have an early connotation as “defrauder” (conjugated from the verb, *roza*). Perhaps the stimulation of Indian Ocean commerce early on bequeathed a spoken morpheme to Africans; perhaps the source was even “Shirazi,” a word heard along inland routes from the Swahili coast and so appropriatable like any other – but this cannot be considered likely.⁴¹ The meaning of the three terms, *rozvi*, *rozi*, and *rotse*, as their uses developed over Zimbabwean and South African elevated farmlands, was in any case always an African matter. For here were legitimate, successful chiefdoms, rankable and subject to known relationships, with trading rights, in fortified places deemed prestigious and worth defending. Such was the norm on highveld land across southern Africa, north and south of the Molopo and Limpopo rivers. We can “translate” all of them, *rozi*, *rozvi*, and *rotse*, as “prestige-place association,” signifying political hegemony and power.

The *rozvi/rozi/rotse* efflorescence becomes fully visible only when the descent-dependent tribal paradigm is left behind. Even, however, if the situation is evoked in an anachronistic ethnic terminology, a venerable “Shona-Venda-Tswapong-Tswana” borderlands may be described. Its depth in time is acknowledged to be great. One finds old Kalanga (i.e., Shona-derived) elite lineages in the thornveld and low country, as well as on the highveld. Shona incursions brought the “Singo” regime among Venda-speakers. Much later, in 1842, Livingstone described Shoshong, when it was the major northern highveld capital town, as composed of 600 “Bechuana” houses and 200 “Talaote” (or, again, Kalanga- or Shona-speaking) ones. The 1860s-era missionary John Mackenzie was told that in former times Shona-speakers dominated the northernmost parts of South Africa. Kalanga-inflected speech may be found among the oldest “Tswana” people in the hills of eastern Botswana still today, and Mokalaka (i.e., Mo+*Kalanga*) is a common highveld name. Finally the Shona-connected ancestor, “Thovela,” associated for Beach with a “deity” or religion, looks a lot like Tebele or Thobane, highveld ancestors – about which, more presently.⁴²

⁴¹ Unlikely because of the intervening two centuries after Great Zimbabwe’s fall, about which data are so far lacking. Joost Fontein, *The Silence of Great Zimbabwe: Contested Landscapes and the Power of Heritage* (New York: University College London [UCL] Press, 2006), 35–41. The authorities on Setswana (or Sotho-Tswana, i.e., Sechuana) grammar and usage here are Clement Doke in his grammar and textbooks, and Tom Brown, in the 1923 edition of his dictionary of *Secwana-English, English-Secwana* (based on the second edition, 1895), my version printed in Gaborone (*Pula Press*, 1982). Daniel Kunene, Part Themba Mgadla, and Baruteng Onamile helped teach me Setswana.

⁴² Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa, including a Sketch of Sixteen Years’ Residence in the Interior of Africa* (New York: Harper, 1860), June 1842;

Totems that named top predators, like crocodiles, hippos, lions, or eagles, were already concerned with authority and power, as were chiefs and twin courts; they were therefore ipso facto political in nature. They were transformed under the *rozvi/rozil/rotse* growth of the 1600s. On the highveld, more complex and more wide-ranging rankings emerged, as well as bigger chiefdoms. Medium-sized towns came together to survive as doughty junior courts, facing invaders variously called *zaze*, *nguni* or *ngoni* and *koni*, and *matebele*. Some of their totems grew into kingdoms; some did not. Some persisted in minority traditions, among or in between bigger entities; others have vanished. And some previously decentralized towns and villages concentrated themselves near defensible fortresses in the mid-1600s.

Crocodiles and snakes help illustrate these trajectories. Like Zimbabwe birds, they appear in the decorative motifs in Great Zimbabwe and other ZP sites. Snakes have an affiliation in popular lore to pools and to gnostic knowledge about the will of ancestors. According to oral traditions collected in the 1920s, however, the people of the place of the snake (“Ba ga Siko”) were crocodile-people who “venerated” the snake (as their totem). They were destroyed and scattered after contending for grazing land in unknown circumstances, and “the remainder” became incorporated into other polities.⁴³ Crocodile (*kwena*, *koena*), on the other hand, remained a major transethnic association, a wetlands-animal totem linking ruling houses over vast distances. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the people of the crocodile were able to claim that they were the firstborn court, out of the first House of *ha rotse* (*rozvi-lrozi-lrotse*-place).⁴⁴

Let us consider one more designation, the very first recorded by Europeans. *Rolong* was the second major prestige-place order in the emerging highveld panoply after *ha-rotse*, its precise origins murky. The compound word, *barolong*, or “people of *rolong*,” predates the word *bechuana* (treated in Chapter 1) in Europeanist annals as we have seen. Perhaps people of *rolong* was the clearest incarnation of the stone-building post-1600 shift, indicating a grouping of chiefdoms achieving success and triumph. As *rotse* taken as a perfect tense forms from *rola*, an infinitive, it is even possible that *rolong* has the same

John Mackenzie, *Austral Africa, Losing It or Ruling It: Being Incidents and Experiences in Bechuanaland, the Cape Colony, and England* (London: Sampson, Low, 1887), 273; Beach, *A Zimbabwean Past*, 49; Huffman, “Archaeology and Ethnohistory.”

⁴³ Schapera in his early publications recognized a “subgroup” of “the Sotho-Tswana” as the “place of the snake” (“Nogeng”). Schapera, *The Tswana* (London: IAI, 1962; first edition, 1953), 89. Doubts placed on Nokanneng, “place of the river” in place-of-fish lore: F. W. Language, “Herkoms and Geskiedenis van die Tlhaping,” *African Studies*, 1 (1942), 117, noted by Nancy Jacobs, *Environment*, 246. I take “*ha-rotse*” as attested because of its and homonyms’ (i.e., “harutse”) appearance in some early texts, *-rotse* as part of this compound (i.e., °rotse), and derive *rotse*-place and so “prestige-place.”

⁴⁴ I note also there are crocodiles on Lewanika’s Barotseland court stool (*setulo*) (Baltimore Museum of Art, curator Karen Milbourne). On royal motifs in Africa, Jan Vansina, *Art and History in Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

source, but this is only speculation. The paths of its diffusion are not known, and they likely stretched for many centuries and covered a wide area.

According to lore the *rolong* court was junior to the first “*rotse*-place” (prestige-place) association, *ha-rotse*. In 1834, Andrew Smith heard an account given of a common ancestor “Thekiso,” who fathered “Masepie,” perhaps the ancestral chief mentioned to Wikar and Gordon as Masepa, perhaps also the word “iron” (*ma* = people of + *tshipi*), or both; and Masepie became the “father of Tau” (Lion) who was the “first king” of the people of *rolong*. Notwithstanding the logic of this genealogy, prior to “Thekiso’s time,” Smith was also told, “the Baralong [people of *rolong*] and Baharootze [people of *rotse*-place] lived together but not in the same kraal.”⁴⁵ The two were unrelated by birth, in other words, but were allies, or near equals: a twin court. At the base of the prestige-place groupings in lore is the same sort of town encountered at Schroda and Bosutswe, and on the highveld in Chapter 1, an unequal, ranked partnership of “great” and “little.” Or rather, this was a good way to understand the past, so long as the *rozvi/rotse/rozi* way forward, as it were, flowed along through partnerships as well as conquests.

An aspiring chief could join the *ha rotse* domain, or claim it, as a feature of realpolitik. Consider the situation of Sebitwane’s men, the dominant cohort of Sechuana-speaking cattle-takers led northward from the highveld by a particularly active chief. When Sebitwane was fighting, his men began to call themselves after a wife, MmaKololo, as has already been noted. They did not recognize Sebitwane’s paternal bloodline in a particular relationship to their own, and so elevated a noninheriting woman while they pushed on. They slew the town of Kanye’s chief, of the people of Ngwaketse, and fought past the Ngamiland crocodile chiefdom (of Tawana) in the mid-1830s, moving up to the Kafue River where they conquered the divided wetlands chiefships there.⁴⁶ When Sebitwane’s fighters finally settled down, seeing that their courts and lineages had been smashed and most of their elders were dead, they at once began calling themselves “people of *rozi/rotse*.”

They felt entitled to say so, much as pioneer cohorts must have felt in the past. They brought some women and youths, and they offered their daughters to prominent Kafue River chiefly families, while their men also married the local women. They made contact with Portuguese traders to the north, as had *ha rotse* chiefs before. They disseminated their language and political practice in Sechuana speech, stocked with the vocabulary and wetland expertise of Luyana: the resulting language was called *serotse* or “SiRozi” (*sirozi*) and it thereafter remained the language of the central court. Subsequently, after

⁴⁵ Schapera, *Praise Poems*. *Rolong* is the locative (with the suffix for place) that would result if *rotse* were treated grammatically as a perfect-tense version of an infinitive (“to doff”), as in items of trade or gifts: *go rola*; and see Barry Morton, *Pre-Colonial Botswana: An Annotated Bibliography and Guide to the Sources* (Gaborone: Botswana Society, 1994).

⁴⁶ Leonard Ngcongco, “Aspects of the History of the Bangwaketse Up to 1910,” Ph.D. dissertation, Dalhousie University, History, 1979.

the overthrow of Sebitwane's son, Sekeletu, by the deposed chiefs of the old regime, the resurgent chiefdoms in turn claimed to be the true *barozi*. This is difficult to comprehend if "Barozi" were a tribe, but it was not: it was an aspect of state construction familiar in the 1830s under this name to ordinary South Africans. The scholarly "correction" of the tribal ethnonym to Lozi – made because indigenous *siluyana* speakers did not have an "R" (*rozi*) sound! – has obscured this heritage.⁴⁷

THE EVIDENCE OF ORAL TRADITION: THE TWIN (TEB –) COURTS VIA ELLENBERGER AND BREUTZ

We have noted how, on the highveld, every so often an ancestor, nearer to the chief in time than the ancients, would give his name to a chiefdom, and the ancestral namesake which *had* been invoked would recede in favor of the more germane one. This was a central process in being a highveld person, corresponding to the narrowing of men's political options vis-à-vis the desires of living princes, lords, and fighters. Collateral lines of men split off, and others formed new alliances in their own interests; sometimes they achieved their aims with a military posture, sometimes without one.

Circumstantial and comparative evidence, and logical reasoning, suggest that the process worked in reverse, too. Men could recall the names of courts, of places (with locative or place-name prefixes), that had been paired in unequal alliances in the past, as *having been* "brothers." Successful princes sought out such retrospective father- or grandfather-oriented alliances, much as Mothibe did in speaking with Adam Kok and William Anderson, and Sefunelo did with Chief Tawana. Genealogies might emerge by consensus and cover the tracks of amalgamations. Something like this was going on at high speed in the 1820s. Thus chief Moletsane reputedly attempted to join the *rotse*-place order in the north (although he was rebuffed by resident *ha-rotse* chiefs, and

⁴⁷ Campbell, *Travels* (1822), 126 and 166: trade with "white people" to the north. Recall that the case that *barozi* and *bahurutshe* and *rozvi* are not related because they do not share the same ancestry, meaning "they are not the same tribe," was our starting point. Beach, *A Zimbabwean Past*, 125; and Stirke, *Barotseland*, 2, 41, 65; Mutumba Bull, "Origin of the Lozi," in Eric Stokes, ed., *Zambesian Past* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), 244–6; Max Gluckman, "Kinship and Marriage among the Lozi of Zambia and the Zulu of Natal," *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, ed. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryl Forde (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1965), 168, 173. Stirke depicts "the true Muluvi nature" as distant, fading, and fugitive; Siluyi the language "doubtless a corruption of an older Siluyi language"! (41); Andrew Roberts, *A History of Zambia* (New York: Africana, 1976), 96, offers the consensus version; see Robert Papstein, "Central African Research Project," in Axel Harriet-Sievers, ed., *A Place in the World: New Local Historiographies from Africa and South Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 161–80; and Karen Milbourne, "Diplomacy in Motion: Art, Pageantry, and the Politics of Creativity in Barotseland," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, Art History, 2003, citing Yuyi Mupatu, *Self Help Education at Makapulwa School: An Autobiography*, ed. Gwyn Prins. (Lusaka: University of Zambia, Institute for African Studies, 1980), 10.

he turned and attacked).⁴⁸ The groupings of totem, chief, ancestor, and the big prestige-place orders were themselves permeable.

Oral traditions offer the nearest approximation to a window onto highveld political practices in their self-conscious, and self-reflective, mode.⁴⁹ Below, it will be argued that popular lore subordinated the twin-court compromise to the founding “prestige-place” association (*ha-rotse*) of the ancient highveld, much as one would expect. Further, two *ur*-twins, Teb – and Teb – ane, will be shown to have denoted this mode, differentiated solely by status (via the suffix meaning “little,” *-ane*).⁵⁰ One is marked as a grassland- or northern-based invader (*matebele*) among highveld farmers, and the other as the indigene. It is possible, though unproven, that the Teb – names derive from “founder” or “pioneer” in common speech (*go thibela*). The tradition is not just mythological, since cohorts of men actually did invade from time to time and created “junior courts” around them. In the same vein, arriving Korana on the Orange (Gariep) River became the Great or Right, and made existing herders “Linkshand” in return.

Oral traditions were not written but were stored through performance and practice. They varied from region to region, in a manner unfettered by checkable texts. They were a discourse, with material added and subtracted over time, and there was often no supreme version of events agreed on by all in any meaningful sense. Spoken and heard accounts are, and were, the result of real processes involving public prestige and acts of gendered and gerontocratic enforcement.⁵¹ D. F. Ellenberger, a Paris Evangelical Missionary Society missionary stationed in Basutoland in the 1860s, did his best to render traditions faithfully, recording the words of men, mainly chiefs and lords. But in fixing them in print, he also inevitably transformed them.

⁴⁸ Etherington, *The Great Treks*, 137, but Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto*, tells a different story, in which Moletsane led thousands of men who brutalized *fhurutse* (another *rotse*-place) people: “Mophati a phathega tsa lefhurutse,” 166–7.

⁴⁹ Keith Breckenridge, “Orality, Literacy and the Archive in the Making of Kas Maine,” *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 17, 120 (1997), 120–39, and Sean Field, “Turning up the Volume: Dialogues about Memory Create Oral Histories,” *South African Historical Journal*, 60, 2 (2008), 175–94.

⁵⁰ For further discussion, see Thilo C. Schadenberg, “Historical Linguistics,” chapter 9, and Nurse and Philippson, “Toward a Historical Classification of the Bantu Languages,” chapter 10, in Nurse and Philippson, *The Bantu Languages*; and Jean-Marie Hombert and Larry M. Hyman, *Bantu Historical Linguistics: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives* (Stanford: CLSI, 1999), and see Creissels’s citations on 334.

⁵¹ Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), and discussions in two recent books: Isabel Hofmeyr, “We Spend Our Years as a Tale that Is Told,” *Oral Historical Narrative in a Southern African Chieftaindom* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1993), “Introduction,” and 165 ff.; Carolyn Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty* (London: Currey, 1998); and see Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), Introduction, and Luise White, Stephan Miescher, and David William Cohen, *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), esp. Abdullahi A. Ibrahim, “The Birth of the Interview: The Thin and the Fat of It,” chapter 5.

The past among men, up to that moment, had been a projection of a kind of multiple exposure of variously agglomerated ancestors. Senior men heard and relayed hegemonic memories in particular locales. Battles and stratagems and place-names anchored their recollections in the commonly beheld landscape, but emphases and named players differed depending on who was talking.⁵² While Ellenberger sought to find agreement among all his collected texts, this was never entirely possible. Households on the highveld renamed boys in alternate generations and might collapse perhaps several Chief Netanyes (or Lions, or Mengwes, etc.) in thirty or forty reigns as one Chief Netanye.⁵³ Some of the distant names which old men retrieved from their earliest lessons were unknown to average people even as they spoke them, for good reason; written kinglists elevated them to a misleading symmetry. Senior informants from different places did not have the same interests and so did not agree. Yet Ellenberger turned virile public discourse into heritage tale, family tree, and crest.

“The Fokeng tradition” contains the names of ancestors, including Napo, Motebang, Mope[d]ji, Malope, and Kwena (Crocodile – two of them), that are not quite compatible with other accounts unless inconvenient elements are redacted.⁵⁴ The people of *Ffokeng* (a chief’s name or “whence the gales blow”), “they” as a unit, arrived at Ntsoana Tsatsi, the “first place” of the ancestors, the settlement that paradigmmed Tim Maggs’s “Type N” Iron Age settlements in the 1400s. Their chief married the daughter of a Bushman chief, his first wife. These people, “the people of *fokeng*” and the people of the crocodile already living there, disputed the right of the chief’s offspring to inherit. According to Ellenberger’s prose, “on the death of the chief, the people of Napo refused to be ruled by his Bushman sons.” They drove the young men eastward across the Drakensberg. This “disruption,” and Ellenberger views it as an event, occurred “250 years ago” (in the early 1600s) when Napo’s “eldest son,” who was named “Motebang,” was already “very old.”⁵⁵

⁵² A point made to me by Ronette Engle in Johannesburg in 1996. In addition to material cited directly, see David Kiyaga-Mulindwa, ed., *Tswapong Historical Texts*. Vol. 1, *Origins of the Batswapong*; Vol. 2, *Politics and Society in Letswapo*, and Vol. 3, *Crafts of the Batswapong*, ca. 1982 (University of Botswana Library); Isaac Schapera, ed., *Ditirafalo tsa Merafe ya Batswana ba Lefatshe la Tshiriletso* (Cape Town: Lovedale Press, 1940) and A. J. Wookey, ed., *Dico tsa Secwana* (Tiger Kloof, South Africa: LMS, 1915); F. Jeffress Ramsay, Barry Morton, and Part Themba Mgadla, *Building a Nation: A History of Botswana from 1800 to 1910* (Gaborone: Longman, 1996); praise songs (Mathuba, recorded outside Lerala, 1990), and Isaac Schapera, *Praise Poems of Tswana Chiefs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965); Isabel Hofmeyr, “We Spend Our Years as a Tale that Is Told,” *Oral Historical Narrative in a Southern African Chiefdom* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1993).

⁵³ Which I found in Tswapong and GammaNgwato and in Tati (Northeast) District. See David Henige, *The Chronology of Oral Tradition: Quest for a Chimera* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).

⁵⁴ Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto*, 15–18.

⁵⁵ Ellenberger, *History of Basuto*, 19; Ellenberger says he interviewed a chief among people of the Tembu chiefdom known as “of the Motjanyane,” who said he was a person of *fokeng* by origin, supporting the account. More of D. F. Ellenberger appeared in the pages of *Leselinyana* in the 1910s in Sechuana than in his *Histori ea Basotho, Karolo II* (Book Two), of which a

Motebang is one of the “Teb – ” courts encountered in these traditions, the “Mo–” making it akin to Motebele, “Person-*teb* –.” Therefore, it is suggested, the figure is likely a telescopic condensation or rectification of several figures. The *-ng* is a locative suffix, “place of,” so if *Mo-tebang* is “eldest son,” it might be read simply as “personification of the senior court of an alliance.” Just as there might be one or several chief Netanyes, there was no sure original chief Teb –. In the oral tradition, the Napo-descended senior court that rejected the part-Bushman sons “crossed the Vaal” and settled (i.e., “founded”) where Pretoria or Tshwane lies today. In the center of South Africa, Motebang’s – that is, the founders’, or senior court’s – people held sway. The court’s senior son is recollected as named “Molemo” (*modimo*): ancestor.

The *fokeng* tale thus serves to reinforce chiefly authority at the expense of rules of inheritance and personal loyalty. A people and a ruler can discard their inheriting chief if they deem the boy’s mother’s people to be of such low station that they would be otherwise disadvantaged. The senior court expels and excludes the defeated household. Whether there was an original, particular, datable, fraternal split, there were likely *many* such, and as a piece of information, the pattern was worth remembering.

To continue the *fokeng* tradition, at Tshwane, the people of *fokeng* first met the crocodile people, the *bakwena*, however anachronistic that might appear, as they had been with them before and shared an ancestor. Their stories continued, and in subsequent generations, produced further twinships. A handful of early chiefs’ names are referenced (and their names reappear in later generations), with no wide agreement as to their relative ranking. Among them, there is Mogale, “very early,” as in *go sale gale*, and Malope, the last of the three or four ancients. Malope’s daughter, his first child, was named “Mohurutshe.”

The anthropologist Isaac Schapera recorded for the Kgafela chiefship of the people of the tan monkey (*kgatla*) a similar list of ancient kings: Malope, then Mohurutshe (a queen), and then, later (under the house of Malekeleke), other chiefs – from which the people of the tan monkey emerged. They lived scattered in smallish towns of a couple thousand people each, the chiefs all ranked allies, subservient to *rolong* hierarchies.⁵⁶ There was, in the tan monkey line, Botlolo, who had two sons: Mogale (cf. above) and *Thabane*. Mogale’s son Matshege begat a woman, of the senior court, Moseitlha; Kgafela, a man, ruled the minor court, in the name of *Tebele*, the senior heir therein.⁵⁷ (Note these italicized names: we will come back to them forthwith.)

Let us turn to the crocodile (*kwena*) tradition and the birth of Malope’s daughter, person-of-*rotse*-place (*mo ha rotse*): Mohurutshe or Mohurutshe. She is “prestige-place” converted into a feminine sign. Her birth appears in

few were printed at Morija in 1820; not all of *Karolo I* and *II* appear in the English, *History of the Basuto*: Peter Sanders, *Moshoeshoe, Chief of the Sotho* (Hanover, N.H.: Heinemann, 1975), 332.

⁵⁶ Isaac Schapera, *History of Bakgatla ba Kgafelala* (Cape Town: School of African Studies, 1942).

⁵⁷ Schapera, *Ditirafalo*, 34 ff., “Tau a Thibele”; cf. Tebele; *go thibela* is to pioneer a settlement.

incompatible attributions to different chiefly houses, which is appropriate, as she is the very embodiment of the highveld political tradition, irreducible to a single figure in tribal annals. As a woman and ancestor, she united her followers in an idiom forged in battle: men traversed simple paternal blood lines in “her” favor. In her semimythical era she, like MmaNtathisi and MmaKololo, fronted a successful men’s alliance for the greater good.

Ellenberger recorded many chiefly *rotse*-place traditions, and in his synthetic version of the story, Chieftainess Mohurutshe’s offspring eventually included one *Tabane* (or Thabane), the great grandson in the above Kgafela tradition, possibly a variety of the “junior Teb – ” type court name. It/he danced the tan monkey totem (i.e., *kgatla*), and then married the “mother of Thulare,” MmaThulare, Thulare being the Pedi-kingdom founder and a name appropriated by yet further chiefships. From Tabane and MmaThulare issued not only Thulare but also “the five great tribes,” as Ellenberger tells it, people of Pedi (*bapedi*; compare Mopedi in the *fokeng* genealogy), those of Khulukhwe (*makhulukhwe*), those of the place of the duiker (*maphuthing*), people of Sia (*basia*), and people of Tlokwa (*batlokwa*). All are *rotse*-place in this story.⁵⁸

In the version of the “Hurutshe” oral tradition collected by P.-L. Breutz in the 1950s, Mohurutshe had three brothers: Kwena, Ngwato, and Ngwaketse, these names also denoting the big highveld patrilineal chiefdoms north of the Molopo river. (*Kwena* again means crocodile – even though the people of *fokeng* had already supposedly long before been with the people of the crocodile.) Mohurutshe was the sole daughter of Malope, and the boys Kwena, Ngwato, and Ngwaketse were Malope’s only sons.⁵⁹ Crocodile seniors later on played a major role in running their juniors’ affairs, but at the time, “the person of the prestige-place association” (Mohurutshe), with a substantial following, trekked away, perpetuating her ultimate seniority. She crossed the Magaliesburg, the Rustenberg area, went south to the Oodi River, thence to the Pitsane River, and came to a place called “ancestor-place” (*modimong*): compare this to “ancestor” (Molemo, i.e., *modimo*), old Motebang’s son in the *fokeng* version above.

According to Breutz, Mohurutshe at “ancestor-place” switched her totem and that of her people from *phofu*, eland, to *tshwene*, baboon.⁶⁰ After this she bore two sons, *Motebele* (Person + *teb* –, founder, senior court) and “Little Motebele,” *Motebeyane*. The twin courts founded two settlements, or

⁵⁸ Ellenberger, *History*, 20, 347–9.

⁵⁹ Previous commentators have treated this tradition as tribally bound narrative history. Maggs, *Iron Age*, citing Ellenberger, *History*, 17, 337, for quote; and see J. C. Macgregor, *Basuto Traditions* (Cape Town: Argus Printing, 1905), 9. Alternately, in the Kwena and Ngwaketse houses’ lore, it was said that a comparatively few generations ago, a chief adopted the “Ngwaketse” ancestry. Alternately again, it was said the others descend directly from “the first Koena cross[ing] the Vaal,” occasioned by “Napo breaking away from his elder brother, Moduli” (Ellenberger, *History*, 20).

⁶⁰ Breutz claimed to have located “Ancestor-place” 11 km. away from the town of Taung.

“wards,” in two places: “Little Baboon,” *Tshwenyane*, and *Kaditshwene*, the latter which appears to have meant “Of the Baboons.”⁶¹

Typically an ancestor’s recollected travels preserve useful history. Perhaps the figure of Motebele, Mohurutshe’s elder son, in his chiefdom’s genealogy, should be associated with a historical, specific alliance of *nguni* or *matebele* grasslands-origin men on the move, or several such. More certainly, however, the twins’ appearance signifies the continued tolerance of de facto senior courts by resident juniors, that is, ranked partnerships. It was this well-prepared highveld political category that awaited Mzilikazi’s eastern warriors when they arrived as conquerors in the 1820s, which is why they were given the name people-of-*Tebele* (Nguni pronunciation: *ama[n]*Debele, “Ndebele”). On the highveld, better a workable, and maybe temporary, subordination, than death by the spear.

HISTORY AS A NETWORK OF OPTIONS

Other (tribal) genealogies would argue that *Tlokwa* or *Phuthing* have different pedigrees, or that *Sia* had nothing to do with *Kgatla*, and so on; this may be so, but overall, the ethnic or tribal approach results only in a fog of particularity. Many chiefly names were apparently recycled, reinhabited, or refashioned on the highveld, whether in (re)naming or in reckoning pedigrees. The early iron-working center of Phalaborwa has a Venda name as some Venda-speakers claim it was theirs.⁶² On the nineteenth-century highveld one can count among polities and chiefs two or more Selekas, Mohurutses, Mengwes, Mopedis, Thulares, and three Langas/Lakas. Significantly, in many places, one finds the *Teb* – versus *Teb* – *ane* fragment, in these or analogous morphemes, because the senior-court–junior-court relationship offered a solution – in lore and fable, and in real life. Human struggle fed regional interpretations of the paradigm, which in turn predicted and guided relationships in the present.

Consider the partnerships exhibited in the place of the fish (*tlhaping*), at Dithakong, its ruling house claiming descent from people of *rolong* to the north like so many other chiefdoms. In the years before Mothibe ruled (see Chapter 1), a two-thirds majority of so-called “Taung,” people of the place of the Lion, under their chief Mokalaka (*Kalanga* = Shona-speaking), dominated Dithakong (Old stone walls place) town. Pierre Borchers noted that Mothibe’s father, Molehabangwe, was further “assisted in the government of his town,” in competition with Chief Mashowe (of Mashowe), by “Macraca” or “Makrakki,” a person-of-*rolong* chief. Macraca claimed to have accompanied as a lad (in the 1780s) some “crocodile” (*kwena*) traders on a visit to a

⁶¹ This is confirmed by Simon Hall, “Archaeological Indicators,” in Hamilton, ed., *Mfecane Aftermath*, 311. See also T. N. Huffman, “The Waterberg Research of Jan Aukema,” *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, 45 (1991), 117–19.

⁶² A nakedly tribal Venda history merely asserts, “The name ‘Bopedi’ [land of Pedi people] is a corruption of Vumbedzi,” and that the Blaauwberg and Phalaborwa (“Balavhurwa”)

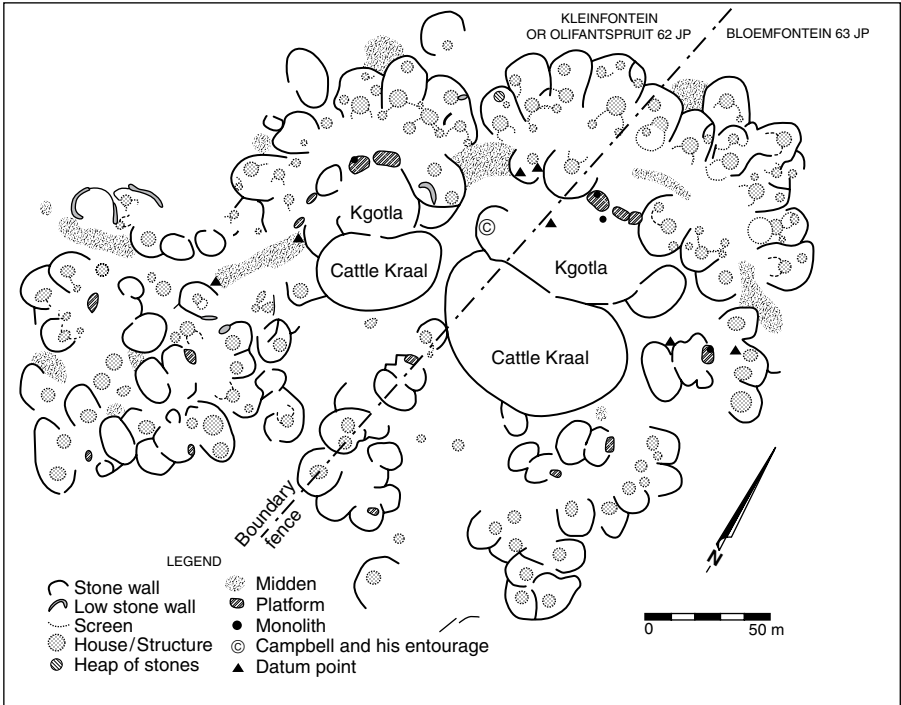


FIGURE 2.3. Kaditshwene's center courts: stone walls and rondavels at "kgosing" (chief's place). Courtesy of Jan Boeyens. A similar map appears in Boeyens, "In Search of Kaditshwene."

Portuguese commercial agent.⁶³ Outside Dithakong (ca. 5,000 people), a second town (ca. 2,000) fell under Chief Mothibe's "full brother," Patani; the historian Martin Legassick notes another section of 2,000 people under a chief, Lepui, who does not appear in fish-place genealogies at all. The two published kinglists of Mothibe's house disagree with each other in the early period and converge only in accepting their descent from a twin-court situation (from Phuduhutswane or small antelope, twinned to Phuduhudu, antelope). Thus for people of the place-of-fish, in the western highveld, some historians speak of a "confederacy" or multiple alliance rather than simple chiefship alone. Was the typical highveld arrangement really so different?⁶⁴

were first settled by Venda: Bureau for Economic Research, Cooperation and Development (Apartheid administration), *The Independent Venda* (Johannesburg: Hortors, 1979), 19.

⁶³ Lichtenstein, *The Foundation of the Cape*, 64, and Pierre Borchers, 127–33.

⁶⁴ S. M. Molema, chapter 5, "Bantu: Bechuana, Basuto (First Ethnical Group)," in Part II, "The Past," *Bantu Past and Present* (Cape Town: Struik, 1963), 35 ff.; Martin Legassick, "The Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana, and the Missionaries, 1789 to 1840: The Politics of a Frontier Zone," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California–Los Angeles, History, 1969, 347 ff., and Kevin Shillington, *The Colonization of the Southern Tswana: 1870–1900* (Johannesburg: Raven, 1985), 12 ff.

Ranked twin courts, the “founder” or senior–junior court division, was a recurring motif in the *rotse*-place traditions, useful for state-builders. For Mohurutshe’s descendents, the structure was instantiated by the further twin-court pairings Mengwe and Manyane (“Little Mengwe”); the name Mengwe also appears in Zimbabwean (ZP) genealogies. Again, the twin paradigm corresponded to real solutions found at various times in the past. Consider the ruins of Kaditshwene town, “the Hurutshe capital” in Figure 2.3. We know with certainty where Kaditshwene is; the archaeologist Jan Boeyens has matched Campbell’s description from 1816 with ruins on a specific farm.⁶⁵ Here is the layout of the central part only of the “chief’s place,” that is, the stone-walled urban quarters laid out well before 1800: a senior and junior court-*cum*-kraal, side by side, separated by less than a hundred meters.

It is known that Kaditshwene’s occupants in the decades before the Cape borderlands developed included an alliance of chiefs under the prestige-place association, the *rotse*-place. In the foundational tradition of “the Hurutshe,” the twin sons of Mohurutshe, the two brothers, Motebele and Motebeyane, fought each other. Motebele was driven back to his former totem, *phofu*, giving issue to the *gananwa* (place of Nanwa?) chiefship, which is suitably said by some to be “really *matabele*” (*ma-Tebele*) in origin, and also spawning some (but not all) of the Kurutshe or Khurutshe (*koo rotse*) chiefships. Their traditions, the traditions of “people of Khurutshe,” as recorded and transcribed by myself and by others, recalled Motebele and Motebeyane not as full brothers but as “age mates” in a circumcision grade together: in other words, as ranked co-eval allies. The insistence that they had undergone circumcision together was marked. That is because they were, as a kind of template, produced by circumcision.⁶⁶

“Motebele Junior,” Motebeyane or Motebejane, supposedly reigned at Kaditshwene town, not Motebele. Here we confront a fact already noted in passing and at first glance very strange: it is often the “Junior Court” (*-ane*) which ruled, and which produced the mainline highveld chiefships. Such a lineage, for instance, produced the house of Seleka, that of Sefunelo at Thabeng. There is therefore a subversive and perhaps truth-telling component in the

⁶⁵ Jan C. Boeyens, “In Search of Kaditshwene,” *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, 55 (2000), 3–17. The figure is reproduced courtesy of Jan Boeyens; see also Boeyens, “The Late Iron Age Sequence in the Marico and Early Tswana History,” *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, 58, (2003), 63–78; Neil Parsons, *A New History of Southern Africa*, 39.

⁶⁶ My Lerala notebooks (1989–90), to be deposited with the Aluka Project; Isaac Schapera, “Early History of the Khurutshe,” *Botswana Notes and Records*, 2 (1969), 1–5, on Lesele, a “senior young brother” of “Motebele.” Cf. Christopher Gray, *Colonial Rule and Crisis in Equatorial Africa: Southern Gabon, ca. 1850–1940* (Rochester: Rochester University Press, 2002), discussing Mwiri; P.-L. Breutz, *Tribes of the Rustenberg and Pilanesberg Districts* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1953), 19. Other traditions hold Ngwato and Ngwaketse to be descendents of Kwena. Note full brothers must not be initiated in one cohort.

oral traditions that remains to be considered. We will have a chance to do so below, in the context of the figure of the lion, the king of beasts.⁶⁷

LION

The lion is both a name of powerful chiefs in the past, and an idea. The lion, Tau, is the very emblem of chiefly authority on the highveld. The president of Botswana is the “Big Lion,” or *tau-e-tona*, and the “Lion Rampant” is a part of many a chief’s seal. Consider Ellenberger’s account of the four houses of the people of the place of the lion, ostensibly arising from Mohurutshe’s first son, Motebele, the senior:

The genealogical tables of the Bataung [people of the place of the lion] show that they became subdivided into four branches, of which the first two were founded by the two sons of Thuloane [note *ane*, small]; and the third and fourth by the two sons of Tsukulu, his “younger brother” [*sic: khulu* means “great”]. When Thuloane migrated from the northwest and founded the tribe, Tsukulu his brother was with him. They crossed the Vaal above its junction with the River Nta (Valsch River), and settled on the left bank of the Kuakuatsi (Rhenoster River); but little by little as they came to know the country, they spread themselves over it.⁶⁸

Scholars aver they are not sure whether all four branches of “the Bataung” (people of the place of the lion) were ever parts of a single chiefdom. Notice for our purposes, however, how the pairing of Tsukulu (great) and Thuloane, a T – (senior) and T – *ane* duo, echoes the Teb – and Teb – *ane* pairing. The Houses then spread out in a new riverine environment.

The descendants of Morapeli [i.e. *-pedi*, two generations after Thuloane] occupied the country to the east of the Kuakuakatsi, which is now part of the district of Heilbron; those of Khomo settled on the banks of the Nta, [etc. etc....]; those of Sefatsa remained for a long time [to the north].... At first all four branches honoured the lion [*tau*] as their tribal emblem.

Note the fluidity of totem and chiefship around the presence of the lion. From the earliest *rozi/rotse* prestige-place association lore, a pair of brothers migrated, structuring and being shaped by the relationship between two or four courts. Variants of the partner-names include Motebang, Motebele, Tebele, Tebang, possibly Thibela, Thibele, Thovela, Thobebe, (and maybe) Thulare, and Tsukulu; *versus* Motebejane, Tebeyane, Thabane, Tabane, and

⁶⁷ The “Hurutshe” tradition then recounts a twin court once again: of Mengwe and Manyane (Little Mengwe), etc.; a *motshwene* (“Mr. Baboon”), and Melore (another one of the “first chiefs” near the first Malope); this signals a further duplication or rehearsal of the “earlier” era. Although Hall, *Farmers* (i.e., p. 53) speaks of the coming of “Kwena and Kgatla,” citing Ellenberger, *History*, 17, 337, Mohurutshe is mostly taken as a single chieftainness from which the name “Hurutshe” derived.

⁶⁸ Ellenberger (this quote and next: 55 ff.) dates events via assignments of average regnal lengths to the names received; for caveats, see Henige, *Chronology*.

(re the above quote) Thuloane. Thuloane was also said to be descended from Motebele, the first “son” of Mohurutshe. Breutz was also told, and Ellenberger confirms, that

The eldest son of Thuloane was Kotele father of Morapeli, whose son Nthethe at the beginning of the eighteenth century had two sons called Tebele and Tebeyane.

Senior-invader-court and junior court, once again. A camouflaged editorial insertion conveys the information that these people lived “on the left bank of the Vaal to the east of the River Kuakuatsi” (the Rhenoster River), and the text continues:

When Tau [Lion], the eldest son of Tebeyane [junior court], was being circumcised, their village was raided by a troop of Maphuthing [people] from beyond the Vaal. Whereupon the *bataung* [the people of the place of the lion] ran like one man to the circumcision [place] to rescue the initiates.⁶⁹

The lion emerged from among the initiates, and from the minor court (Teb – *-ane*), which supported him as their chief. His domain was already known by his name (place of the lion): he is both chief and ancestor, such that the cyclical nature of ancestor and chief was beheld.

Ellenberger records what he calls a once-“well-known” self-praise alluding to the above incident, apparently to be sung at top volume: “We are Bataung [people of the place of the lion]; the Machela [the name of their age-regiment] of Nthethe, son of Morapeli. *We are people of Tebeyane, chief of those who saved him.*” Like the *fokeng* “Bushman sons” story, twin-court stories showed how strict inheritance and descent might be overthrown. In the “Save Tebeyane” chant, a lion emerges in the junior house, and the age regiment that was sworn to the deceased chief backs him. “Save Tebeyane!” became “a saying” in the region. As tribal lore, it is a bit of trivia, but as a political bon mot it touches the heart of highveld tradition. It meant that mobilized men could, in the end, find whatever leader they pleased, even the junior (*-ane*). Ranked and allied men were the essence of the people of the place of the lion.⁷⁰

“The beginning of the eighteenth century” is Ellenberger’s speculation for when these events occurred. But it is impossible to say when the chief-as-lion idea first became available for reuse and reenactment along the feeders of the Vaal and Orange rivers. Nor are so many chiefly “twin births” credible. Rather, men in military formation were always a threat, especially if they acted in concert, especially under partnerships. Consider the history of *Tau* (the Lion) in another domain, that of the *rolong* chiefdoms. This lion was said by some to be a relation of the first one (as the son of “Masepie” who was in

⁶⁹ Among the other chiefships telling similar stories are people Ellenberger calls “cousins,” Maphuthing, and Baphuthi, both terms meaning people of a kind of antelope. The Seleka and Ngwato totem is also *phuthi*. Ellenberger, “Senior Branch of Bataung,” *History of the Basuto*, 55.

⁷⁰ Ellenberger, *History*, 20, 55. Morapeli (outside Lesotho’s orthography) is *Mr. Father-of-Pedi*.

turn the son of Thekiso, the legendary “Bahurutshe” king). The anthropologist Jean Comaroff offers a perfectly reasonable summary of the history of these *rolong* chiefdoms (“Barolong”), embracing inter alia Sefunelo’s settlements at Thabeng and Makwassie. Again *Tau* means “Lion,” and Morolong, like Mohurutshe and Motlhaping, is a personification (Mo-), in this case, of the *rolong* prestige-place association:

The documented history of the Barolong ruling line begins with the accession of Tau in c. 1700–1760, some fourteen generations after Morolong. Tau’s chiefdom was located in an area stretching south from the Molopo River along the present South Africa-Botswana border ... (Legassick 1969: 115; Stow 1905: 490; Molema 1966: 4). Various recorded as “great warrior” (Molema 1966: 4) and bloody despot (Stow 1905: 490), Tau provides an example of the widespread processes of incorporative state building among the peoples of southern Africa in the eighteenth century. His imperial exploits expanded Barolong suzerainty from just south of the Molopo to the northern boundaries of Batlhaping territory at Taung[.]⁷¹

As Isaac Schapera tells us, this Taung would have been named after a previous Tau. How different is this situation from Tau, son of “Tebeyane”? Tau, the “first king” (*kgosi e kgolo; modimo wantlha*) of “the Barolong,” is supplied with the father Thibele (cf. Tebele) in at least two royal *rolong* genealogies collected in 1869 and 1880.⁷² From *senior house* comes a lion, from *junior house* comes a lion. The overlapping and hesitant stamp of a paradigm is again visible.

The recited history of the house of Tau’s son, Ratlou, tells that *his* sons contested him: Seitshiro, Modirwagale, Maribaneng, and Mokalaka. After Ratlou died, due to smallpox it was said, the latter two, Maribaneng and Mokalaka (“Mr. Kalanga”), in a partnership, built a town at Morokweng (“place of a rain-maker”). Under the Ratlou mantle the heir, Seitshiro, ruled a small chiefdom. In most accounts, competing scions Tshidi, Seleka, and Rapulana begat new

⁷¹ Jean Comaroff, *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 20, who also notes the “motif” of competitive half-brothers.

⁷² University of the Witwatersrand (WITS), Papers of the Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA), William Crisp Papers (Crisp) Vol. 1, Gd1.1, “Maino a batho ba sehuba ba Morolong,” appended to Crisp to His Father, Thaba Nchu, 24 November 1869, from his mission press; and *Friend of the Free State*, 26 August 1880, “Genealogical Table of Barolong Chiefs.” There are several incompatible versions of the *rolong* chiefly houses. Another one that does *not* give Thibele as Tau’s “father”: Andrew Smith, in 1840, recorded “Makare, Masepa, *Sacopie*, Taue,” and then as sons of Tau: Ratlou, Tshidi, Malema, and Seleka, which split into two houses: Sefunelo’s grandfather’s, and the actual, bypassed senior Seleka line: “Memoranda A,” Smith’s pagination: 53–4. The list from Bloemfontein in 1880, going back to “Mabe” and “Noto” and other figures, has “Masepe or Mokoepo,” who begat *Thibele*, who bore Tau and another son, “Tau junior,” or Tauane, the grandfather of Tshidi. Tau’s three sons were Ra-Tlou (father of the elephant), Seleka, and Ra-Pulana (father of the nourishing rains). See also Gaborone, BNA, ZKM 19 (Notes) A 2.11 c. 1930, A 2.115 ... for another genealogy, from 1937 (thanks to J.L. and J. Comaroff).

chiefdoms, developed alliances, and attracted immigrants – thus becoming “new ancestors interceding with the old.” The Seleka ruling house is a junior house, as Sefunelo’s grandfather emerged from the junior court and usurped the house of Lion’s other “sons.” The (dead chief) Tshidi chiefdom, under (living chief) Tawana (“Little Lion”), and the (dead firstborn) Seitshiro faction, under (living chief) Gonntse, nonetheless both came as partners to aid Sefunelo in 1824, when he fought Moletsane, that other aspiring lion.⁷³

Lion was certainly a given name; it recurs severally in Sefunelo’s household. We cannot know how many Lions ruled, just as we cannot know which historical figures were full brothers, or half-, or just classificatory brothers. We can however conclude that in *rolong*, as in *ha rotse*, and other textualized traditions, one finds partnerships of courts in the past *recollected* in the idiom of brotherhood. The uneasy coexistence of the chief-as-lion, with the notion of junior courts underwritten by ranked enfraternization, defined the politics of the highveld. Of course, many small chiefdoms struggling through periods of crisis, such as 1822–4, regarded the lion warily, as he liked to eat up other people’s cattle.

CROCODILE

Let us continue for a moment longer with the oral tradition of the highveld, focusing on the people of the crocodile to the north, associated (inter alia) with Chief Sechele I’s household on the western side of the middle Limpopo, as one moves closer to the present in time. Here as elsewhere, we will find that oral tradition’s accounts not only vary over space but they undergo a qualitative change as they creep closer to the present. They come to record real historical individuals.

For the crocodile people in the generations following the “first” *kwena* or *mokwena* (“Mr. Crocodile”), the historical period postdates Kgabo (monkey), a first ancestor or totem, or court; and it follows also a second Melore, and further twin sons, Malope and “Little Malope” (Malotshwane) – the name Malope, corresponding to Mohurutshe’s father, retrieved and twinned with a junior version of itself. Their relative order, and what they signified, were reworked in accordance with more recent history. In Sechele’s genealogy in its dominant textual form, following Malope and Malotshwane are a group of short, collaterally ranked chiefs, complexly descended, and accommodating many branches of the crocodile network. There is also among the familiar names, a second Mohurutshe, who this time ruled as a regent chieftainess in a more recent century: she may be a duplication of the earlier figure or a historical model for her, or neither.

One finally reaches, in Sechele’s heritage, the winning chief’s line, in this case Sechele I’s ancestry. The men recollected therein, to a depth of eight chiefs, actually lived; they each had sections of their resettled town (Dithubaruba;

⁷³ Comaroff, *Body of Power*, 21.

Molepolole) named after them, along with Sechele's court: they were the "real" crocodile wards.⁷⁴ These were densely settled neighborhoods. In the winter, the mornings would reek of the acrid smoke of wood-burning fires, dogs barking, cocks crowing. Their burgeoning populations, very distantly agnatically related to the central chiefly patrilineage, pressed on their urban neighbors. Patriarchs or lords (*barena*, *makgosi*, *dikgosana*), some who acted like veritable equals to the chief, allies (i.e., *dikala tsa kgosi*) rather than employees, ruled and judged over these large sections of town. These were the wards that sent the greatest numbers of young men away to external alliances and alien chiefdoms. Some of their lineages would have reaffirmed their bonds with the chiefship by exchanging wives and cattle, or occupied some other special status; others would not have. There was under Sechele even a ward of *ur*-crocodile people who held themselves and were so regarded by others as somehow senior even to the house of Mokwena or Kwena (Mr. Crocodile).

The eight most recent names on Sechele's list of ancestors may have comprised further omissions, reorderings, and amalgamations, but each one corresponded to people grouped together on the ground and arrayed about the central court: their putative patrilineal descendents. Note that the foundational ancestors in the Mohurutshera tales have no such descendents, and no eponymous wards, because they correspond to ideas and not people in the past. Some other ancestors have a spatial rubric, but many do not. In making brotherhoods where there had perhaps once only been distant cousins or strangers, however, the Teb – / Junior Teb – paradigm served a different purpose, an important and creative one. In the Tswapong Hills in the late twentieth century, I found that different constituencies of people altered their ancestors' relationships in hindsight to reflect new realities developing among them. I only learned of minority traditions contradicting those shifts by abandoning the format of the group interview, in which oral tradition is often a consensus, and listening to exiled factions in conversation. If I am correct, and retrospective enfraternizations (usually of three generations ago) were not uncommon, they were surely elided and erased in most dominant oral traditions. That was one of the main purposes of oral traditions.⁷⁵

In other words, when chiefs "changed their totems," Tebele and Tebeyane helped them fit their ruling houses together and reckon their integration and separation. To repeat the adage: "The elephant when it crosses the river becomes a little elephant." The saying announces the reverse of the Ma-Tebele

⁷⁴ F. Jeffress Ramsay, "The Rise and Fall of the Kwena Dynasty of East-Central Botswana, 1820–1920," Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1991; and Isaac Schapera, "Notes on the Early History of the Kwena (Bakwena багаSechele)," *Botswana Notes and Records*, 12 (1980), 83–88.

⁷⁵ Author interviews with members of the Dialwa family in 1990 in Lerala. I am not the first to emphasize the relative neglect among historians of the amalgamative nature of so-called ethnic polities: e.g., Eldredge, *A South African Kingdom*, 29, 128–31; cf. Robert M. Baum on the Casamance, Senegal, *Shrines of the Slave Trade: Diola Religion and Society in Precolonial Senegambia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 62–3.

(senior court) river-crossings that subordinated people around them: coming in from the wilderness, the phrase suggests, joiners might adopt junior status *voluntarily*. Elephants big and little (*tlou – tlouenyane*) were chiefs, and some of them had to band together. Not all of them were already brothers and simply spread out over the country.

* * * * *

From at least 1400 on, South Africa's indigenous political traditions developed out of a wider, connective process bringing people and ideas together over long distances, Venda, Shona, Sechuana, foreign. There was one big thing, not lots of little things, going on.

The Iron Age map of southern Africa shows a flow of pottery and building techniques and so of shared influences over and across multiple terrains, up and down the green, fertile grasslands, the valleys that attach the Zambesi highlands, the thornveld, the red Kalahari sands, the highveld, and the rolling hills and peaks of the Drakensberg range down to the Maluti mountains.⁷⁶ European house rats and Indonesian chickens appeared in southern African farmers' and herders' settlements after 800 AD: should we be surprised if the Indian Ocean trade system had something further to do with people's politics over the succeeding half-millennium?⁷⁷ International commerce helped generate the magnificent rule of Mapungubwe, Toutswe-mogala, Great Zimbabwe, and other centers, ZP and CP, which developed rituals and celebrations of inclusion. The gathering of people in stone-walled highveld towns, the dissemination of their cattle to smaller centers, and the development of more effective modes of unifying and mobilizing populations: such processes unfolded widely in southern Africa, and in a mutually reinforcing fashion. By the 1500s, highveld settlements grew and forged connections. In the 1600s and 1700s, people created further unequal alliances, "Moros," *batlhanka*, mateships, "Bechuana Bushmen," and "Twin-Court" situations. They strengthened their highveld towns. The language of their modes of interaction was established and was widely shared.

The end of the 1700s disfavored the *rotse*-place societies, and expanded the totemic alliances of chiefs; trade connected them to emerging southern markets, especially those interested in ivory tusks. Just as tobacco and maize worked their way up onto the highveld a century ahead of European people, so too did the proliferation of the commercial relationships that ivory hunting spawned. A mighty lion of a chief, "dancing" (honoring) iron, might have ruled under the people-of-*rolong* rubric, in the mid-eighteenth century. After a further period of transformation this was no longer the case. The balance shifted toward those chiefships, including Mothibe's and Moshoeshoe's grandfathers, which fielded contacts with métis or Khoe-speaking traders from the Colony and offered safety to new kinds of refugees on defensible terrain.

⁷⁶ Jan Vansina, "Historians, Are Archaeologists Your Siblings?," *History in Africa*, 22 (1995), 369–408; also <http://www.h-net.msu.edu/~africa/africaforum/Vansina.html>.

⁷⁷ Vansina, personal communication, July 2006.

By 1800, the Bantu S-group-speaking farmers, in their crocodile and *rotse*- and *rolong*-related chiefdoms, controlled the watersheds of the Vaal, Harts, Orange, Molopo, Modder, Marico, Notwane, Apies, Wilge, and other tributaries. They had nurtured a political tradition capable of accommodating and embracing strangers, one fully formed even before the arrival of Cape “Korana” and métis into their midst. And they fought one another. In 1822 and 1823, two consecutive failed harvests and a famine coincided with an especially hostile wartime environment, including slaving commandos, which created the conditions signified by “the Difaqane.” In short order the people of the central highveld were forced to repel or flee a series of especially disruptive eastern invasions (“Ngwane,” “Hlubi”), and then Mzilikazi’s militarized state, events connected to Kosi Bay and the Mfolozi River, where powerful grasslands chiefs clashed with one another, among them Shaka Zulu. The oldest *rozi*- and *rotse*-place chiefdoms suffered worse than the rest. Only Chief Diutwileng led an appreciable number of people of *ha-rotse* (of Mengwe), at Kaditshwene, amid the fragments of other chiefdoms; and he was murdered. North of the Limpopo River, the *rozvi* (or “Rozvi”) affiliates in Zimbabwe would also fall victim to Mzilikazi’s people of Tebele in due course.⁷⁸

The prestige-place orders’ political lexicon outlived the orders themselves, as we will see. But tribes did not preserve it. Rather the language and logic survived, and were transformed, in the discourse of churchgoing Christians. That is the subject of the next chapter.

⁷⁸ See Chapter 3.

Translations (Missionaries and the invention of Christianity)

Christianity commenced in South Africa's heartlands in the second decade of the nineteenth century. From the perspective of highveld people, the faith began as a novel way of using the language of mobilization, brotherhood, and settlement. In the midst of the violent displacements of the 1820s – the Difaqane – small numbers began to rework their basic political vocabulary in its remit. Among the pioneers were métis men from the Cape and the borderlands. Establishment missions insisted on the apolitical nature of métis and African mobilizations, argued with them, and translated and retranslated them. In this back-and-forth process, Christianity came to be.

This chapter is about the early translations that midwived Christianity out of highveld speech and highveld ideas. It is not claimed that such is all that Christianity was, nor all it became, but it was at least this. In particular the chapter is concerned with Robert Moffat, the pioneering missionary and translator. In contact with Christian converts, patriarchs, and other evangelists, Moffat contributed more than anyone else to Christianity's written canon. Only by understanding his interactions with junior chiefs and lords, in the crises marking the 1820s, can we grasp how Africans, métis, and Europeans together made Christianity in South Africa.

Scholars have produced a large and impressive historical literature about missionaries and imperialism in the colonial and postcolonial world. For southern Africa, there have been several veins of interpretation, but in recent decades Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff have created an especially enduring and influential model. They have demonstrated how missionaries helped integrate people into unseen frameworks and patterns, facilitating the greater project of exploitation. In their work, and in most of the history written about South Africa, however, Christianity itself has as a rule been left alone.¹ Missionaries' cultural interventions are critically appraised, but

¹ Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*. Vol. I, *Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), and Vol. 2, *The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* (Chicago: University

missionaries' core function is not. In this chapter, the subject is Christianity, the stuff of belief, set in its evolving context.

At the same time, no attempt has been made to chart "religious change." Instead, religion is understood as a historically constructed intellectual and practical entity. Too often the story of Christianity is assumed to begin with one religion, even if never reckoned as such, progressing to another, more tutored version. Precolonial religion is today a huge folder with reports about people's behavior sorted in various ways at different times. The collected information is valuable, but the folder has split its seams. In African Studies today scholars salute indigenous religion while at the same time asserting that there was no such entity in itself; spiritual belief was apparently everywhere in daily actions, and nowhere referenced as such.² Joseph Mbiti and other pioneering divinity scholars embraced this paradox and founded schools of Africanist theology on it, accepting bundles of practices as precursors to enlightened belief. They have usually imagined that an essentially redemptive, encompassing monotheism lay in the middle of that bundle, even if it was never clearly exposed.

This chapter tells a different story. It makes little sense to think in terms of a traditional religious system, per se, or even a set of practices and ideas

of Chicago Press, 1997). Among domains in which imperialism and evangelism have been evaluated together are the birthing room, model home, and the surgery (Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999), the bath (Tim Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997), the formation of narrative (Isabel Hofmeyr, *We Spend Our Years as a Story That Is Told* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1993), and Hofmeyr, *The Portable Bunyan: A Transnational History of The Pilgrim's Progress* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), and the 1970s Black Consciousness movement (Daniel Magaziner, *The Law and the Prophets* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, forthcoming)), as well as more expected Althusserian institutions, school, and church: Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971; reprint, 2003), 85–126. The literature on African missions is wide and deep, beginning with Roland Oliver's excellent *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (London: Longman, 1952); Richard Gray, *Black Christians, White Missionaries* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990), is a balanced synthesis, and see Peter Van der Veer, "Introduction," Peter van der Veer, ed., *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

² This is an old issue. David Chidester relates the 1860s debate between John Colenso, Henry Callaway, and W. H. I Bleek on the original meaning of "Unkulunkulu," said by Callaway to be a progenitor, not God; Callaway accused Bleek of interpreting Zulu thought "by the light received from Christian Theology, and so have supposed the heathen to be that which you yourself believe," related by David Chidester, *Savage Systems: Colonialism and Comparative Religion in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1996), esp. 156, 132. See Malcolm Ruel, *Belief, Ritual, and the Securing of Life: Reflexive Essays on a Bantu Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 5 – thanks to John Lonsdale; Stephan Palmié, "Of Pharisees and Snark-Hunters: Afro-Cuban Religion as an Object of Knowledge," *Culture and Religion*, 2, 1 (2001), 3–19; Louis Brenner, "'Religious' Discourses in and about Africa," in Karin Barber and P. T. de W. Farias, eds., *Discourse and Its Disguises* (Birmingham: Center for West African Studies, 1989), 87–103; demoting "belief," Stuart Clark, "French Historians and Early Modern Popular Culture," *Past & Present*, 100 (1983), 77, 99, and Barry Hallen and Olubi Sodipo, *Knowledge, Belief and Witchcraft* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997; originally published 1986).

with a discrete religious function, over most of southern Africa. There was no separate body of practices with an interpretive priesthood or set of rituals; no accepted set of ideas connected to an afterlife or eternal life; no vision of an omnipotent God standing apart from men and time. No religious system or spiritual domain can be postulated before missionaries introduced those ideas themselves.³ Aspects of public life looked religious only in hindsight, when key translations had already been set into discourse and text. Missionaries saw that highveld people habitually recognized symbols connected to an actual chief or regime, to the *real powers* under which they lived, not to written abstractions. In particular, the Reverend Moffat intuited that his material would have to come from the chiefly, political domain.⁴ His printed translations then became the trellis upon which the ivy of religion grew, tended by many hands.

ROBERT MOFFAT (AT LARGE)

Robert Moffat was a young man of twenty-two when he arrived in South Africa in 1817 and settled in Stellenbosch, a conservative, rural Dutch town, as a representative of the London Missionary Society (LMS). He assisted in the church and learned the Boers' version of Dutch, and he formed a lifelong fondness for them as a people. Then he moved on to his society's evangelism among people of color. He would purge the rolls of men deemed to have transgressed racial or sexual boundaries. Acting with George Thom, another missionary, Moffat called an impromptu meeting, terming it a "synod."⁵ The Reverend Thom had attacked the extension of civil rights to "Hottentots," quite against the Liberal grain. It was Moffat and Thom, instinctively oriented toward white settlers, who compelled the Reverend Campbell to visit South Africa, and as related in [Chapter 1](#), to appoint a local supervisor to stay behind after he left. That man turned out to be John Philip, in the end not a dependable ally of Moffat's program; but Philip did at once confirm Moffat's

³ My elaboration of a mechanics of conversion is in Landau, "'Religion' and Christian Conversion in Africa: A New Model," *Journal of Religious History*, 23, 1 (Special Issue: Africans Meeting Missionaries, 1999), 8–30.

⁴ Political in the sense of discourse concerned preeminently with the state, the person and institution of chiefship, public safety and prosperity, and the distribution of rights and responsibilities among men and women.

⁵ See Clifton Crais, *White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-Industrial South Africa: The Making of the Colonial Order in the Eastern Cape, 1770–1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 89, and Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth Century South Africa and Britain* (New York: Routledge, 2001), esp. chapter 3. Several biographies of Moffat exist; see Moffat, *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa* (London: R. Carter, 1843; London: John Snow, 1846), and Robert Moffat and Mary Moffat, in Isaac Schapera, ed., *Apprenticeship at Kuruman: Being the Journals and Letters of Robert and Mary Moffat, 1820–1828* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1951); J. P. R. Wallis, ed., *The Matabeleland Journals of Robert Moffat, 1829–60* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1945); and Steve de Gruchy, "The Alleged Political Conservatism of Robert Moffat," in John de Gruchy, ed., *The London Missionary Society in Southern Africa, 1799–1999* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000), 17–36; his sources, 194.

firing of several men, among them James Read, the pioneering missionary to Dithakong.⁶

Moffat moved to Namaqualand, and in 1819, he brought in from those western borderlands the bandit leader, Jonker Afrikaner, whom he claimed to have converted to Christianity. Meanwhile, the Reverend Read, left in limbo outside the town of Dithakong, crafted one of the very first printings of “Sechuana,” as the language would be written, in a spelling book produced at Griquatown. The Colony border was closed to travel in reaction to the métis “Berganaar” rebellion against conscription, and the slashing Grahamstown attack of an eastern grasslands-based alliance under Nxele (or Makana); and Moffat was deflected from his mission personally to relieve Read. Instead, he looked to “purge” the LMS church at Griquatown, expelling many of its most venerable members.

Moffat saw Griqua evangelism as a disguised form of “Griqua imperialism” and felt that Read’s and Hendrick’s church work had facilitated it. He disliked relying on métis interpreters.⁷ Campbell’s initial naming of ambiguity, the bestowed “Griqua” label, was in Moffat’s view seeping out of its proper tribal place and expanding. Moffat also clearly disapproved of Read for his actionable offense: he had committed adultery, and fathered a métis son named Isaac, after which Read reconciled with his wife and confessed. What Moffat most despised, and correctly associated with Read, was a flexible philosophy of Christian inclusion that permitted métis and other black men to merge their leadership and “spiritual” roles into one.⁸ He understood that Christianity had not itself brought a new, simple, unitary belonging, as might have been hoped, but instead underwrote various other cross-cutting loyalties. There were Griqua, and there were pro-LMS “Baster” and “Bastaard” (métis) churchgoers who were not Griqua (whom Sefunelo’s family wanted

⁶ Read’s story is well told by Elizabeth Elbourne, in *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions, and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799–1853* (Montreal: Queens University, 2002), 218–27; Doug Stuart, “‘Of Savages and Heroes’: Discourses of Race, Nation and Gender in the Evangelical Missions to Southern Africa in the Nineteenth Century,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1994; Julia Wells, “The Scandal of James Read and the Taming of the London Missionary Society by 1820,” *South African Historical Journal*, 42 (2000), 136–160; and see Karel Schoeman, ed., *The Mission at Griquatown, 1800–1821* (Griquatown: Griqua Toerisme Veren/National Book Printers, 1997), 17, and Schoeman, *The Griqua Captaincy of Philippolis, 1826–61* (Pretoria: Protea, 2002); see also Henry Bredekamp and Robert Ross, *Missions and Christianity in South African History* (Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand Press, 1995), and Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport, eds., *Christianity in South Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), for context.

⁷ “The apostasy of our interpreter [Cedras], a Bootchuana, and the abominable conduct of some of the Hottentots, have been the source of much grief to us....” Cedras “died entirely ignorant” of what “I had been preaching” in 1822, Moffat to Alexander Moffat, 25 February 1822, Moffat in Schapera, *Apprenticeship at Kuruman*, 56–7; also cited by William Worger, “Parsing God: Conversations about the Meaning of Words and Metaphors in Nineteenth Century Southern Africa,” *Journal of African History*, 42, 3 (2001), 433.

⁸ Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 221.

as allies, inter alia); these same people traded gunpowder to “mountain” (*bergenaar*) communities in open rebellion against the Cape Colony. There were the Engelbrechts, Hendrickses, and Barends, and other powerful Griqua Christians, who demanded parity with “European” Christians, as we have seen. Moffat set himself against all métis and African highveld power, updated and Christianized in form and focus. Somehow this position has been overlooked by his biographers.

If Moffat was against such indigenous adoptions of Christianity, he was for something else. We might call this program “establishment Christianity.” The word “establishment” is not meant to connote the high church, but rather a closeness to the administration of the Cape Colony, and a connection to large denominations with their centers of gravity in Europe and the United States. In 1821 the Cape Colony reopened its northern borders with the requirement, for the first time, that all métis and Griqua men coming in had to register and procure a pass. At the same time, other legislation, culminating in the famous “Ordinance 50,” affirmed the basic rights (property, labor) of these people living inside the Colony’s borders. Moffat composed a delegation including a number of métis people and left for the long trek to Read’s station. The status of métis domains, of Christian, brown-complected men, was in great flux and vulnerable. On his arrival Moffat found that the métis men living in the *tlhaping* (fish-place) polity, in Dithakong, had become “a kind of council chamber” for the chiefship there.⁹ He interrogated parishioners and as he had in Griquatown excommunicated many of them, especially those prominent men whom he thought remained in the church for “political” reasons.

As a sign of their loyalty these Dithakong people had rejected the label “Griqua” and stayed “Christians” only; when pressed to identify themselves further, they stubbornly offered their dialect version of “bastard.” Moffat’s repudiation was therefore a blow to them. After eviscerating their council, and still acting in the name of the LMS’s director, or fathers, Moffat’s party asserted authority over Read. The people strenuously objected to the eviction of the popular man, who no longer preached and mainly fixed people’s guns and hoes for a living; the point, however, was to “teach the people ... to submit to the powers that be.” Moffat wore his beard uncut for this work, like an Old Testament patriarch. The powers that be would shortly include a Cape magistrate, charged to enforce new legislation counteracting Ordinance 50, and cementing laborers and farm hands more closely to landlords and other employers.¹⁰

The fish-place Christians’ patron, chief Mothibe himself, grew angry with Moffat and the LMS, and blamed Moffat’s flowing beard for the growing drought of 1821. The chief demanded a discontinuity in Moffat’s attitude

⁹ Moffat, *Missionary Labours*, 199–200; John Smith Moffat, *The Lives of Robert and Mary Moffat* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1888), 66; cited in Schoeman, *The Mission at Griquatown*, 131.

¹⁰ I.e. after 1828. Martin Legassick, “The Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana, and the Missionaries, 1789 to 1840: The Politics of a Frontier Zone,” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California—Los Angeles, History, 1969, 288 esp.

and behavior, and shaving would be a start. Only then would it rain. Moffat rejoined to Mothibe that such ideas were “superstition.” Mothibe indicated to Moffat that Moffat’s interventions threatened his authority, that his chiefship was not so secure by custom, culture, or race, as Moffat might think. He told Moffat that he was “raised among the Korana” and that he found many of the Bantu-speaking people-of-the-place-of-fish ways “strange.” But leadership under the incorporative logic of the highveld was what he had and what he would keep. And so he told Moffat, “leave us or we must leave you.”¹¹

Moffat’s response is unknown, but the confrontation was so unsettling to him that he failed to record it in his own diary. Mothibe’s people fled Dithakong along with their internal (“pro-LMS”) métis allies, looking to ensconce themselves with better protectors; in the tumult of their departure, they encountered the Reverend David Kay and his wife, giving them a scare. It was Mr. and Mrs. Kay who then returned to Silver Fountain and warned Samuel Broadbent and party not to venture any farther in 1822 – because of unrest and disorder in the interior.

* * * * *

RAIN, TOBACCO, CHIEFS

“It’s raining” certainly seems like a universal idea. Its form in different languages strikes one as superstructural, as clothing on an inner frame, as (merely) different ways to say “it.” The critical reader Umberto Eco plays with this idea in his musing on translation: “In order to realize that the sentences *Il pleut*, *It’s raining*, *Piove*, and *Es regnet* express the same proposition,” he writes, “we ought to be able to express the constant proposition in a sort of metalanguage.”¹² But of course we can’t, because there is no real metalanguage, even if one has been “dreamt of over the centuries.” There are only actual languages, spoken by actual people.

Are the world’s “it’s raining” statements really “a constant proposition”? What about the idea, on the highveld, that *the chief or another expert could make it rain*? Might not such an idea change the meaning of “rain” and even “It’s raining,” making it less of a universal notion than one might think? Rainmaking is usually seen as a claim for what chiefs or experts can do, but as such, it is just as much a claim for what rain is. Ludwig Wittgenstein considered “the rainmaker,” as an idea, in his commentary on Sir J. G. Frazer’s best seller, *The Golden Bough*, along these lines. People in the real world as he knew it, Wittgenstein argues, did not believe their ruler could simply command it to rain when he wished,

and the ruler knows very well that he doesn’t have [this ability either] or can only fail to know it if he is an imbecile or a fool. But the notion of his power is, of course,

¹¹ Legassick, “The Griqua,” 277.

¹² Umberto Eco, *Experiences in Translation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 10–11.

adapted in such a way that it can harmonize with experience – the people’s as well as his own.¹³

The implication is that “it’s raining” cannot itself be taken as universal. In other words, the meaning of even a phrase accurately enough translated as “it’s raining,” was situationally inflected in such a way that it “harmonize[d] with experience,” and so it differed from place to place. Europeans, not having the experiences of highveld dwellers, did not entirely get it. A song that the anthropologist Isaac Schapera recorded for part of the Bechuanaland Protectorate asks ancestors to “rain us,” or “cause-it-rain us!” “*re nese pula*”: a favorable status for “us” is requested, not *something* for us. The verb *go na* (to rain) is entirely unlike “rain” (*pula*) and in the passive produces “drink” (*go nwa*). Even when rain was uttered as “*puuula!*” under an actual downpour (drawing out the “*uuuuu*”), in my presence, the implication was more “the coolness!” than “take note: precipitation.” Rain is a state of being. Another song requested the “puller” or “sucker-down” of rain to make it rain: “*Ooo, mogoge,*” women sang, “*Goga.*”¹⁴ “Pull,” or “Suck.” The meaning of “It’s raining!” was also inflected by the fact that “Rain!” was shouted at a chief, a form of applause and acclaim. And when rain was remembered, deep in the past, it stood for peace and plenty, as against the realities of hardship and old age.¹⁵

The missionaries’ view of language was akin to that of St. Augustine: every word had its one, single, true meaning. They denied the variations above, the two or more semantic fields for “rain,” and they treated their language as if it were the Adamic “metalanguage” of myth, even though they did not phrase things this way. In their own speech among themselves, rain was precipitation and occupied a position supported by knowledge of barometers and dew points and almanacs. *Pula* could then begin to *become* precipitation, plain and simple. Other matters became defensible or indefensible additions to this significance; some would be filed away as superstition, some as ignorance, some as poetry.

The view taken by (late-career) Wittgenstein and by Umberto Eco, and by me, is that words, including even the English “rain,” operate on the world in all sorts of different ways, not one way. They cannot be defined by fiat (“*x* means *a* and nothing else”). They should rather be grasped by being observed and recorded in their instances of use, along with other contextualizing information. Most missionaries, and certainly Robert Moffat, felt by contrast that words had one true reference. Once Moffat used Sechuana words, he began to feel that even the intelligible use of a native word by a native speaker might be

¹³ Ludwig Wittgenstein, “Remarks on Frazer’s *Golden Bough*,” I, 1931 (MS 110), and II, ca. 1948 (MS 143), in *Philosophical Occasions, 1912–1951* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), commenting on J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (New York: Macmillan, 1900), 168.

¹⁴ Cf. Thomas Arbousset and François Daumas, *Narrative of an Exploratory Tour of the North-East of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope* (Cape Town: A. S. Robertson, 1846), 259: “Song of our forefather, come home to us! How shall I farm? Come home, come home.”

¹⁵ It omits the *el* infix (to, for, etc.) and so suggests the verb “to rain” has a direct object which is “us,” and Isaac Schapera, *Rainmaking Rites of Tswana Tribes* (Leiden: Afrika-StudieCentrum, 1971), 85 ff.

incorrect; in other words, it might *become* incorrect as establishment Christian spaces expanded, and thereafter have forever been thus.¹⁶

The missionary felt he possessed divine truths that had stable meanings and which all nonbelievers had yet correctly to grasp. Expressing these truths aloud, he had to tout the rightness of the (peculiar) way he used words that were already familiar to his hearers. At the same time, in the midst of translations, the missionary could not avoid confronting a *choice* among words he might select, all having prior circumstances of use if they were known terms. At the moment of decision, of naming his own Christian concepts, the missionary translator moved from translating in order to comprehend, to translating in order to convey new meaning. And then he erased his tracks. Ancestor would eventually be said to have always meant God, just as “rain” (*pula, go na*) was said to have always meant precipitation. Other existing usages on the highveld turned into blasphemous usages, or vague and unresolved usages. Once rain was transformed by conversations, expectations, and invocations, in other words, it still signified eternally, seemingly in the past as well as present; but its prior declamation in courts and yards and battlefields would thenceforth look slightly askew, not completely right.

Here for instance is Malcolm McVeigh, the author of *God in Africa*, typical of a genre and consistent with this tradition:

The Tswana for example use an elaborate system of signs in their worship. One method is for a man to put his hand on his chest. Another worshipper strikes his thigh, followed by the tossing of dirt or pieces of wood into the air. ... These are the equivalent of voiced prayers.¹⁷

The meaning of these gestures is revealed *actually* to be prayer. And when whatever is going on here (*go rapela, go botsa*, or something else) comes to mean prayer, the people can be said to have always known prayer, but imperfectly, incompletely. These acts and their proper label were thus “equivalent,” in one sense, and yet not so in another.¹⁸

It is now “the Tswana,” the tribe, that acts; it is the ethnic characteristic of “the Tswana” to “do” or “not do” something. “The Tswana” (or Bechuana,

¹⁶ St. Augustine is discussed by Wittgenstein in his famous opening to *Philosophical Investigations*, referred to here (2e). See Peter Brown, *St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Wittgenstein, *On Certainty* (London: Blackwell, 1969), §410, 20.3.51, p. 52e, and Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, II, 3rd. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1969) vi., 181e.

¹⁷ Malcolm J. McVeigh, *God in Africa* (Cape Cod, Mass.: Claude Stark, 1974), 105, citing Edwin W. Smith, *African Belief and Christian Faith* (London: United Society for Christian Literature, 1936); see Edwin W. Smith, “The Idea of God among South African Tribes,” in Edwin W. Smith, ed., *African Ideas of God: A Symposium* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1950), for his own words.

¹⁸ Moffat, in Schapera, *Apprenticeship*, 173. Cf. Gayatri Spivak, “Introduction,” in Spivak and Ranajit Guha, eds., *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 11, and Dipesh Chakrabarty’s remarks on “gods” and craftsmen’s tools, in *Provincializing Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), Intro, 12–13.

as it was spelled in the nineteenth century) behave as a whole. However, when “Tswana” enquirers told Moffat they were attracted to pray as Christians did, they said they “did not know to whom” they were to direct their words. Ordinarily, men and women with their “voiced prayers” would have been addressing a chief, not a countrywide spiritual entity.

Histories of “religious change” cannot explain the significance of shifting the object of “prayer” (e.g., for rain) from the chief to a Being “above.”¹⁹ Issues of rain were the responsibility of the chief, because without rain no political order was possible, and women marched on the court half naked to humiliate him. Perhaps the chief could put together ranked, collective dances and feedings in honor of his ancestors; perhaps he employed the best and smartest gnostic experts, even ones from the lush forests of central Africa. With truly sustained crises, however, able-bodied young men and their wives left the town, with or without their cattle ahead of them, leaving the chief with no people. The chief had to ensure it would rain.

Consider further that the very same word, *goga*, to “pull” down rain, also meant “to smoke tobacco.” Moffat refused to translate “rain-puller” (*mogoge*) into his canon. To inhale, or snort, pulverized tobacco, *go goga*, was associated with powerfulness or sharpness, and the headrush of inhalation, and the mini-orgasm of the sneeze, and so with “life force” or “breath” (*moya*). Recall that Gordon and Wikar, in 1779, felt that tobacco smoking defined highveld people as an ethnic entity. Hodgson in the 1820s planted thirty-seven shoots in order to stock up on the weed that “the people ... would gladly worship” if given the chance.²⁰ Tobacco has other associations with fertility. In the 1950s, pouches of tobacco (*segwana*) were carried back and forth from the Tswapong Hills to the Blauwberg on the Mogalakwena River to bring rain and better the crops, marking chiefs’ alliances that might prove critical during droughts.²¹ Old women even today pinch the scrotums of little boys – called *segwana*, tobacco pouch – and pantomime a huge *goga* snort of their fingers, and exclaim “Strong!” or “He’s going to be a man!”²²

Rain and inhaling tobacco were linked in chains of signification because they entailed related activities. Tobacco was therefore one node around which power was “harmonize[d] with experience” (Wittgenstein) in the rain-making activities of the chief. It was not the only one, of course. The idea of *pula* or rain attached among highveld people not only to smoking and snorting

¹⁹ E.g., S. A. Thorpe, *African Traditional Religions: An Introduction* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1991), e.g., 6: religion “is a ... reaching out toward awareness of a greater whole than oneself.” Similarly see John Samuel Pobe, ed., *Exploring Afro-Christology* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1992), and G. C. Baeta, ed. *Christianity in Tropical Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968).

²⁰ SAL, MSC 39/13, books 7–12, Thomas Hodgson, Thabeng, March 21, April 7, 1823; Colin Murray, “Sex, Smoking and the Shades: A Sotho Symbolic Idiom,” in M. G. Whisson and M. West, eds., *Religion and Social Change in South Africa* (Cape Town: Juta, 1975), 58–80.

²¹ Interviews, Lerala, Botswana, 1989: Mokapadi Ramosoka; Koowetse Molebalwa, M. Dialwa.

²² Colin Murray, “Sex,” and personal observation in 1990 in Tswapong.

tobacco but to many other unremarked aspects of life missionaries did not associate with rain. On the highveld, rain came up in conversations about history, ancestry, fertility, production, the health of the wider social network, and the rightfulness of strong chiefly authority. All such instances of saying rain felt correct, made sense, and worked to position rain in human experience.

– Now consider how it must have sounded when missionaries, as if correcting a tribal superstition, told chiefs, “You cannot make rain!”

* * * * *

At first the figure whom missionaries touted, a putatively “greatest” and “great” entity, occupied a seat beside the other great ancestors, or chiefs in the past. All the great dominions had great ancestors. Under the names and traditions of chiefs in the past or present, the Pedi kingdom of Thulare, the Zulu kingdom of Shaka, the sway of MmaNtathisi, the protected kingdom under Mzilikazi, or Moshoeshe, or Makhaba, or Khama (in Botswana), all constructed themselves from households coming from diverse places, over and against the rules of ethnic and blood inheritance. Mission stations did likewise, albeit (at first) in miniature.

Mzilikazi’s 200 or 300 warriors, his “Matebele” under the people-of-Khumalo mantle, took wives, militarized young highveld men, and subordinated large parts of what would become the Transvaal. The chief continued to call the polity Zulu. His unsuccessful American missionary, Daniel Lindley, said their “form of Zulu” was called “Tebele.” In the 1830s these people of the senior court became a great highveld chiefdom ruling perhaps 60,000 people. Destroying the old crocodile centers and the domain of the *ha rotse* chiefs over a vast area, Mzilikazi moved from the Apies River to Mosega, centering his rule in the Marico.²³

In the 1810s, another young man, named Thulare, led a group of settlers, perhaps formed from an age-regiment, to new climes. While Mzilikazi moved northwest, Thulare’s heir Sekwati in the 1820s brought together numerous headmen who would have called themselves people of *fokeng*, Fingoes, and by the names of various chiefs of the past, to the Steelpoort River area. Added to them were further “Nguni-speaking” (grasslands) people, all collected under the old chief’s name Pedi. The chief admitted some escaped slaves to become citizens too, and his domain exercised supreme power in the eastern Transvaal: the people of Pedi.²⁴

²³ Edwin Smith, *The Life and Times of Daniel Lindley, 1801–1880, Missionary to the Zulus* (London: Epworth Press, 1949), 81; “Chwana” (Sechuanana) being the most common language spoken in the kingdom. See Etherington, *The Great Treks*; Julian Cobbing, “The Ndebele under the Khumalos,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Lancaster, 1976; R. Kent Rasmussen, *Migrant Kingdom: Mzilikazi’s Ndebele in South Africa* (London: Rex Collings, and Cape Town: David Philip, 1978), and William F. Lye, “The Ndebele Kingdom South of the Limpopo River,” *Journal of African History*, 10, 1 (1969), 93.

²⁴ Peter Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us: The Pedi Polity, the Boers and the British in the Nineteenth-Century Transvaal* (London: Heinemann, 1983); and Delius, *A Lion amongst the Cattle: Reconstruction and Resistance in the Northern Transvaal* (London: Heinemann, 1996).

The erstwhile lord and subchief Moshoeshoe built the most long-lasting order. Moshoeshoe – “the cattle razor” (an idiophone: shwe – shwe, the sweep of the blade) – built his following, escaped his enemies, and trumped his senior (crocodile-order) cousins. Previous to his success, mountain people were called “buckled-garb ones,” *abeshunto* in regional speech. This became “people of *souta*” or “people of *suto*,” or Basuto. (Eventually this came to be spelled “Basotho” in the Lesotho nationalist, and dominant, orthography.) Basuto were built up as Moshoeshoe amalgamated pieces of polities (and dialects) from all over South Africa, including some Khoe-speakers and others of grasslands descent. Moshoeshoe’s acquired herds also established new lines of authority for him: cattle became ancestors, making him chief. Thus “A cow is the ancestor with the wet nose.”²⁵ Like “Pedi,” “Basuto” was a name to be given meaning by him and his people.

The culmination of the mobilization of young men in the 1820s in these and other modes – chiefships, rump sections of towns, militias, twin courts, and less successful unities – was a new order of states based in old principles and practices pushed to accommodate unforeseen challenges.²⁶ Some men achieved “greatness” by midcentury as few had before; others kept to alliances and smaller claims. The argument here is not focused on the eastern side of the Drakensberg, but we might wish to know, was the story similar there?

A COMPARATIVE LOOK AT THE GRASSLANDS OF THE EAST

What of the “northern Nguni,” the denizens of Natal and Mozambique? Related to the “Xhosa” and their allies, their oldest settlements dating back to AD 1100, these people built widely spaced villages and sent their young to be initiated far from their homes. From time to time they dispatched ambitious leaders southward or over the Drakensberg or up into the Limpopo Valley. At the turn of the nineteenth century, several alliances rose and fell under the ancestor Ndwandwe and subsequently Ngwane and Mthethwa. Then, at the start of the 1800s, a fierce, centralized military kingdom on the Mfolozi River united their warring factions: “the Zulu” under Shaka, as has already been noted.

As a word-root, *-zulu* is an enigma. Yes, perhaps “Zulu” was already a minor branch within the congeries of ruling chiefs and subchiefs of Shaka’s father’s line. But maybe too it was selected as a particularly modern kind of name, a reference to overrule and to the Above.²⁷ *Izulu* meant “up” or “of the sky” or

²⁵ Hoyt Alverson, *Mind in the Heart of Darkness: Value and Self-Identity among the Tswana of Southern Africa* (New Haven, 1978), 125–6, for another interpretation; John William Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa, 1822–24*, 2 vols. (London: Longman, Hurst, 1824; reprinted New York: Johnson Reprint, 1967), Vol. 2, 127; and see Isaac Schapera, *Praise Poems of Tswana Chiefs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965).

²⁶ Etherington, *The Great Treks*, 89.

²⁷ This idea is in embryo in Julian Cobbing, “The Mfecane as Alibi: Thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolombo,” *Journal of African History*, 29 (1988), 487–519; and see Etherington, *The Great Treks*, 87 ff., and Jennifer Weir, “Ideology and Religion: The Zulu State,” Ph.D.

“heaven,” and in another derivation, “lightning.” On the highveld lightning was *legadima* and the heavens were *godimong* (and hurricane, *ledimo*), forming a batch of concepts related to ancestor, *modimo*: mighty forces beyond man’s immediate control. Shaka’s own promulgation of the word heaven or *zulu* as his ancestry, in his terrifying and majestic kind of rule, entailed an overt rejection of Christianity.²⁸ East and south of the Drakensburg, powerful chiefs in general did likewise, and perhaps Dingane, Shaka’s regicide and successor, offered the clearest explanation. He said that his people “had heard about God,” and understood the missionaries well enough. “We have only one God. I am that God.”²⁹

In the southeastern grasslands of South Africa, the historian Jeff Peires tells us that the acceptance of rule in the name of a specific ancestor, Tshawe, is what allowed the expansion of “Xhosadom.” What was Xhosadom? “The limits of Xhosadom were not ethnic or geographic, but political: all persons or groups who accepted the rule of the Tshawe [reigning house] thereby became Xhosa.”³⁰ *Xhosa* originally meant “angry men” in a regional Khoe language, perhaps applied with special force by nomadic pastoralists to people of Tshawe. DNA and linguistic science both testify to centuries of intermarriage in the eastern Cape, such that many individuals (“Khoe-” or “Xhosa-” assigned) are scarcely distinguishable in physique or coloration.

Besides Tshawe, and Phalo, his historical successor, another antique chief’s name, [u]Hlanga, was undoubtedly important. We know this because missionaries briefly adopted the name as the word “God.” They also liked the word “ancestor,” *ithongo*, however, and used that, but in the end, they settled on *uthixo*,³¹ a Khoe-derived word (like *xhosa*) perhaps connoting harshness. Among the Tshawe-allied courts a major and minor house lay beside one another, and close to assorted other, related chiefdoms. To these unevenly delineated domains may be added yet further scattered settlements, some claiming different descent.³² There were also Khoikhoi clans inside central

dissertation, University of Western Australia, History, 2001, citing “Jama” as “Great-great,” and “Phezulu” as becoming an ancestor in lore.

²⁸ Carolyn Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty* (London: Currey, 1998), and Etherington, *The Great Treks*, 69 ff.; John (J. B.) Wright, “Politics, Ideology, and the Invention of the Nguni,” in Tom Lodge, ed., *Resistance and Ideology in Settler Societies*, Vol. 4 (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1986), 96–118.

²⁹ Richard Brangan Hully, *Zululand under Dingaan: An Account of the Rev. Mr. Owen’s Visit to Zululand in 1837 ... in South African Bound Pamphlets*, 140, 6 (held at the South African Library), reprinted from *Cape Monthly Magazine*, n.s. 2 (1880), 321–32, cited in Jennifer Weir, “Ideology and Religion.”

³⁰ Jeffrey Peires, *The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of Their Independence* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1981), 19.

³¹ Ibid. Uhlanga: Moffat, *Missionary Labours*, 257–8, cited by Worger, “Parsing God,” and see Janet Hodgson, *God of the Xhosa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); WMMS, Journal of the Rev. William Shrewsbury, 1829, fiche 69, box 301.

³² “Tambookies,” “Hendrick’s” people, “Danster’s people” (who became denizens of Moshoeshoe’s domain), a pioneering “commoner court” unrelated to Tshawe, two military settlements holding the status of “nephews” of Ndlambe, etc.

Xhosa congeries. Indeed one can hardly speak of “the Xhosa” in a stable sense over a wide area without simply using it as a polite substitute for “kafirs,” the derogatory term employed by British settlers in the Eastern Cape.

The major Xhosa chiefdoms, while they kept their independence, divulged scant few converts to Christianity. Then there was Makana, or Nxele as he is more commonly remembered. Textbooks often follow a formula of discussing Nxele in association with Ntsikana, as a kind of dialectical parable of “Xhosa responses to Christianity”: Nxele the “uncompromising wardoctor” versus Ntsikana, the later “Xhosa prophet” who turned ultimately toward establishment, mainstream Christianity. This is implied to be a sufficient panorama of “responses” to “modernity.” Nxele’s military and millenarian attack on Grahamstown in 1819 is represented as coming out of nowhere and doomed to failure.³³ After Nxele’s imprisonment and death, in subsequent crises, “Xhosa chiefs” lined up both with and against one another as they had before, relying on strategic alliances, until they could be mobilized by another outsider.³⁴

Let us reimagine Nxele in more prosaic terms, as a chief building a following in the name of an ancestor or Ancestor. The Grahamstown war of various allied factions loyal to him might be considered central to his ascent, even if it was unsuccessful. Thomas Pringle, the English settler and writer, commenting on Captain Stockenström’s reception of Nxele’s surrender, quotes his representatives as referencing Nxele as simply “the chief.” We are disposed to read him as a diviner and not a chief because he was not from a chiefly house, but this was hardly uncommon. Might his swift rise as a war chief, in connection with Heaven, be considered alongside the contemporary ascents of other big chiefs – even Shaka? Only, tuned slightly closer in pitch to Christian discourse? Nxele claimed to be in communication with Heaven, and he asked his followers to kill their “dun-coloured” cattle in order to prepare for victory.³⁵ Shaka and Mzilikazi were praised as “of heaven,” too, even if they did not call themselves Christ’s brothers. Several of the grand nineteenth-century South African polities partook of the same currents of ideas that missionaries also appropriated. The direction, Up; an ancestor cloaking military alliances; a refusal to accede to ethnic identities – these characterized all of them. The pertinent differences were sorted out eventually, and orthodoxy was dispensed in print alongside a defined and monitored pedagogy. But not all at once.

³³ The very useful *The Reader’s Digest Illustrated History of South Africa: The Real Story*, 3rd ed. (New York: Reader’s Digest, 1994), listing Colin Bundy and Christopher Saunders, eminent historians, as primary contributors: see 104.

³⁴ Peires, *House*, 83, 188. On August 27, 1828, at the “battle of Mbolompo,” Matiwane’s followers became wanderers (*ukumfenguza*, der. Fingo), and thence “Bhele, the Hlubi, the Zizi and the Ntlangwini.” For Fingoes, a pejorative, see J. B. (John) Wright, “Nuafrica,” May 2, 1996, archived at H-Africa.net, and Wright, “Turbulent Times.”

³⁵ Thomas Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence in South Africa* (London: Edward Moxon, 1835), 296–307, 331–2, reprinted in John A. Williams, ed., *From the South African Past: Narratives, Documents, and Debates* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 56–63.

As Robert Moffat took up his new station, called Kuruman, in Read's place, very much was indeed still in flux. The worst of the storm that produced Nxele and his efforts, and other frontier wars, struck the highveld again in 1822 and 1823. Robert Moffat's and Samuel Broadbent's language-work unfolded in the midst of it: in the Difaqane.

* * * * *

CREATING GOD'S KINGDOM, PART I: INITIAL TRANSLATIONS

Broadbent glossed God as "Mudeema" (*modimo*) in his earliest notes from Sefunelo's chiefly place at Thabeng. He asked that highveld people understand the word as a *spirit*. This was not so simple. "Since we came here I have been asked the three following questions, and those only," wrote Broadbent from north of the Vaal. "'How great is God,' 'Where is God?,' 'Has God hair?'" If God were real, where was he? Was he a person? How was his disapproval felt? There were no easy answers. "I am going to tell you what I know about him," the French missionary Arbousset said in explanation, "even though I have the misfortune of knowing these wonders only in my mind."³⁶ Broadbent, also, perceived the need to convey the discorporeal nature of the "forces" he discussed, but he struggled with how to do it. He first had to learn some words to speak with.

The métis interpreters, for their part, played on the nature of highveld ancestry and chiefship as the cause for tribulation, by offering "devil" and "evil" as ideas related to ancestors. In other words when ancestors were mentioned "evil" came up next. Some Bantu-speaking farmers felt this way, too, as we have seen. "My ancestor kills me," it was said; "he hurts me."³⁷ The spy and diplomat Andrew Smith was told "in early times [*bogologolo*] they had an idea of something evil in the ground," which they called by the "name" *modimo* (Smith is vague as to case, and often deployed an unusual plural, *maremo*).³⁸ Next, however, the act of blaming ancestors for real-world evil was deflected away from the singular, "ancestor," and toward the plural, "ancestors," only: that word became "Satan" in the 1820s. "They speak of the devil, whom they call Badeema,"³⁹ ancestors, Broadbent wrote. As for the singular form, highveld people continued to "speak of" him without "knowing" anything about him. Perhaps it seemed so because pronouns and deictic terms ("ancestor," "great-chief") do not possess narratives. Only actual past chiefs have lore.

³⁶ Arbousset and Daumas, *Narrative*, 65.

³⁷ Campbell, *Travels in South Africa Undertaken at the Request of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 2 (London: LMS, 1822); and WITS, Cullen Library, "Station de Motito: Lettres de Mes. Lemue et Rolland, 1833," *Journal des Missions Evangeliques*, 9 (1834), 257–76. Motito today is Bothithong.

³⁸ SAM-L, Sir Andrew Smith, Vol. 12 ("Memoranda A"), nr. p. 15, "batlhaping."

³⁹ WMMS, S.A. corr. Broadbent, "extract from his journals" (his hand) encl. in Broadbent, Makwassi, 8 June 1823 (fiche 300/no. 28).

Nearly all early observers, whatever their individual differences, remarked that the highveld population displayed no religious worship. There was no realm of the sacred, and no false idols to overturn. The first missionaries found highveld farmers, and indeed all South Africans, entirely unconcerned with a “deity” in their own lives. “No word to express the Deity by,” said van der Kemp (about “Xhosa”-speakers). No knowledge “of *any* God true or false,” confirmed William Shaw. Highveld people had “no idea of a spiritual, invisible, and infinite Being,” wrote Broadbent. They remained, said the early French Protestants, “indifferent jusqu’au soir de sa vie.” When they asked to whom the Reverend John Campbell “prayed,” and they were told, “a Great Being” (*mogolo?*), the problem was that “they did not know him, for they had never seen him.”⁴⁰ Robert Moffat agreed, “They have no religion,” they were “entirely ignorant of a ... Creator.” This was not a political position: Anderson, whom Moffat fired, also thought back in 1802 that highveld people had “no religion.” Moffat observed of them that they were “neither theists nor idolators.” Everything “beyond what they see and feel they consider vanities of vanities.”⁴¹

Indeed they might better have been described as pragmatic. When South African farmers were asked to speculate about origins or the beginning of time, they said that the world had grown to become itself: it developed in the manner of plants and animals. For missionaries, on the other hand, the transcendental realm was “real,” and “truer” than the visible world. One had to commit to its reality on faith. And *where* was it? The answer for both Broadbent and Moffat was “up,” although Broadbent also favored the notion of “in the air.” The missionaries further combated the apprehension that the sky and heavenly bodies above were natural phenomena and held no persons. The stars, for example, were said by highveld townspeople to be organic growths, with “stems” holding them in place, hidden behind their luminescence. Taking “stem” as a metaphor (what else could it be?), this is a scientifically defensible point of view. Both Broadbent and Moffat asserted that such thinking was wrong.⁴² The heavens were a creation by the “greatest” or “only”

⁴⁰ Van der Kemp: Janet Hodgson, “A Battle for Sacred Power: Christian Beginnings among the Xhosa, in Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport, eds., *Christianity in South Africa*, 70. The Reverend Shaw quoted in Crais, *White Supremacy*, 101; Broadbent “no idea of a spiritual ...” is from his published *Narrative of the Introduction of Christianity among the Baralong* (London: Wesleyan Mission House, 1865), 81–4 (January 1823); French: e.g., WITS, Cullen Library, “Station de Wagenmakers-Valley, Extraits d’une lettre de M. Bisseux, du 9 Mars, 1837,” *Journal des Missions Évangéliques de Paris*, 21 (1837), 203, and Moffat, in Schapera, *Apprenticeship*, 264; and Nathaniel Matebule’s amanuensis, in Paul Landau, “Transformations in Consciousness,” Robert Ross, Carolyn Hamilton, William Nasson, and Bernard Mbenga, eds., *Cambridge History of South Africa*. Vol. 1, *Ca. 200 to 1885* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 538; and Moffat: e.g., Schapera, *Apprenticeship*, 49.

⁴¹ Moffat, in Schapera, *Apprenticeship*, 83, from 25 May 1823: “After retiring to my wagon I became a little dejected. Tried in vain to sleep.” Anderson, in Schoeman, *The Mission at Griquatown*, 30 (“18 month interview”).

⁴² Burchell, *Travels*, Vol. 1, 550. Cosmological scientists require “dark matter” and recently “dark energy” as forces holding the universe apart from itself.

ancestor, personally. The vector, “up,” referenced their special domain, which was God’s place. He made the world, and He hung the stars not like flowers, but lanterns.

Like *where*, the question of *when*, applied to God and his Heavenly domain, was answered defensively with highveld phrases and ideas. One of the missionaries’ responses was to make the biblical era, the time of the tales, “long ago,” when one’s ancestors were men. But there was no easy gloss for “long ago.” The same words are also given as “very great,” with *-golo*, great, repeated, becoming “very-greatness” (*bogologolo*). The idea of greatness was expressed by *-khulu* in the “Nguni” languages of the east, and used in many of the same contexts. The linguistic root is a very old one, deployed widely for grandparents and elders: in Kaguru in East Africa it is *koro*, forming “elder” (*mokoro*) and “ancestor” (*omokoro*). It is related to *gola* or *hola* in Sechuana, to grow (cf. *goditse*, matured or senior).

The derivations of “great” all concern honor and legitimate seniority close to power. “Very-greatness” also meant “long ago” (*bogologolo*), for this was a location indicating a domain prior to cyclical time, connected to ancestors. Ancestors, especially ancestral chiefs of the past, were “great ones.” Beyond these general trends, Christians shaded “very greatness” into their concept of “up.” God created Heaven and Earth and its denizens in the “very great” era, when the world operated differently. Among Zulu speakers the doubled form, “great-great person,” (*u*)*nkulu-nkulu*, meant an individual “foundational ancestor,” a name at the dim recesses of genealogies; or, with *umu-*, simply a grandparent. In Natal, Christians used “great one” and “great-greatness” to mean God and the Divine, respectively.⁴³

Complicating the placement of the missionaries’ new intellectual space, *when* had a second answer in addition to “Long ago.” This was “Very soon.” For the Bible was not only a historical record of God’s actions but also a source of predictions and prophecies, and Moffat, like most of his contemporaries, preached that the messiah was about to return, and that God’s kingdom was at hand. The greatness was historical *and* immediate. Disobeying divine commands brought misfortune in life, right now, the missionaries said. What was coming was coming soon for everybody, anyway, including you: the Grim Reaper, and the great-greatness time and a father up above, poised to judge you. No wonder many people ducked away when missionaries approached, muttering “I only know how to eat nuts” or “I am thinking cow.”⁴⁴

PRAYER IN TWO VERSIONS

There are two translations of “The Lord’s Prayer” preserved in the singed back cover of the one-volume *Encyclopaedia Permenthes* that Samuel Broadbent kept his notes in. It somehow survived the fire that devastated his Thabeng

⁴³ “All nations have their own Unkulunkulu,” Chidester, *Savage Systems*, 157–67.

⁴⁴ E.g., Moffat, in Schapera, *Apprenticeship*, 253 (Monday, 21 May).

mission when it was attacked and burned in 1824. One verse is transcribed from a lost letter or text by Robert Moffat, and the other is Broadbent's. They allow us a unique glimpse into the process of ecclesiastical translation. In fact, the two efforts together comprise a very early (1822–23), foundational theological dialogue, conducted on the fly.

Broadbent's version is roughly as follows. "Our Father(s), who is/are in the sky, your name, let it be feared, your chiefship, let it return (to us), on earth and that being similar in the sky." ("Hare a chuna Ya mo lo goreemo Lina gago le booweve Bogoshe ya gago booele Mole haatsing Oeele chwanse mole goreemoo.") Before one thinks further about "in the sky," one notes that Broadbent could not completely determine the singularity of "father," because *rre*, father, was often left singular in plural usages (*rre* or *rra*), or given as *bo-rre* or *o-rre* – Hare? – and individual elderly people were normally deindividuated as *lona*, you (plural) becoming an ultra formal form. It was *gago*, "your" (singular), which would have stood out as inappropriate for a person of very senior stature.

Broadbent wrote, "Who is/are in the sky," using the word *godimo*. "Your name, let it be feared, Your chiefship, let it return (to us)," asks that a chiefship "return," and thereby implies a restoration of lost authority or a recovery of territory. The venue was to be "On earth and that being similar in the sky." In today's orthography, Broadbent's phrase "that being similar" would be spelled *tshwanntse*, "been made same," so that the central message he conveyed was of a kingdom or father being rendered similar or "returned," here and as an image (*setshwantso*, same root) "in the sky." This was both a here-and-now (potential) order, and a projection, backward in time, *and* into the near future, but most of all, up into the blue sky – of chiefship, and ancestry, and the power of the historical past.

The other effort is the "Lord's Prayer in Sichuan by Mr. Moffat," sent to Broadbent via Griquatown sometime in 1823 or very early in 1824, when Moffat was mastering rudimentary highveld interpellations. In Broadbent's transcription, Moffat pursued an agrarian theme that continued in his other work, notably his translations of the Psalms and Gospels, even as it disappeared from his published Lord's Prayer.⁴⁵ Like Broadbent, Moffat emphasized "up above," heaven, as the domain of the Father, but he stressed fertility and wealth, not just chiefly power, as what was to be imagined there. "Our father(s) who are up above, his name is honored, multiply your bitings, increase your nature (or custom), on the earth as up in the sky," was his inept attempt. ("Hara chima eo qua legoreemo, leina Yagoe le a dudéueewa, Go lonla ga ga go atela, Moko a o a gago o atala mo rehátse yaka qua legoreemo.") The novel usage is *go lonla*, most likely a transcription error of *go loma*, "to bite." This

⁴⁵ John the Baptist (Revelations 6) was preferred over the Apostle John (1), and "Siamisang tsela ya Yehova," was echoed in Isaiah (i.e., 40:3); School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), Robert Moffat, "Mahuku a Morimo" (not "Marimo" as is wrongly listed in catalogue), Kuruman Press, 1842, and "Mahuku a Morimo mo puon ea Secuana," 1847 (H 259); and Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation*, Vol. 1, 46, 80; Vol. 2, 121–3.

would yield “biting” or “tasting” the “first-fruits” (usually gourds, *ditsego*) of the harvest, and “Your biting,” or blessing, “be increased.” The “you” would ordinarily be the chief, who did the tasting.

Thus in the early days of translation we find horticultural and fertility metaphors deriving not only from the English countryside that vanished in young Moffat’s youth, but also, and most of all, from the chief’s “first-fruits” role. “He begat us because of his love by the true word, making us the first-harvest-fruits of creation,” Moffat would also write, translating James 1:18.⁴⁶ “Your biting be increased” was here signaled by Moffat using another farmer’s word, the verb *atela*, later repeated (and mangled) in *atama*, deriving from *go ata*, “to increase,” common parlance in discussing one’s herds of cattle. The last line enjoins, “Your nature (or custom) increase, on the earth as up in the sky.” Increase in grain and cattle is invited, and projected as a feature of above.

Moffat would later recollect, “the language was deficient in theological terms.”⁴⁷ The “first-fruits” supplied some of those few available. Each year the chief commenced the harvest season with a first-harvested gourd or melon, anointing himself, and “biting,” recommitting to the proper ordering of the community at the moment of consumption. The first crops to ripen were the melons and curcurbits (*thotse / marotse* or *mabucwa* [pl.], and *disego* [pl.]). The ceremony was perpetuated under the watchful eyes of missionaries once thanks were given to their ancestor. The metaphor of tasting, however, drew on the power of *chiefly* authority most of all. In [Chapter 1](#), it was suggested that masculine political space, based on cattle transhumance, ancestry, alliances, and chiefs, could remove itself from towns, farmlands, and the women and children bound to them. But as was indicated in [Chapter 2](#), on the other side of the spectrum of political behavior, successful chiefs built in stone or defended towns for several generations at a stretch. It was therefore all-important for the chief to control women’s harvests and to position himself at their center. As the chief anointed his body with the first-fruits, now God “blessed” (same word: *segofatsa*). As the chief brought rain, now God brought it. Broadbent spoke of the blessed – the saved – as *baditsego*, the “gourd-people” or perhaps “first-fruit people” in his formulations. They were downtrodden (*humanegi*), the poor, the reversal of *go huma*: “bereft of cattle and influence.” Like the Bushmen servants in the Cape, they were “the meek” (*pelonomi*, soft-hearted, kind). The ranking order was reversed and enquirer status opened to those of the lowest status. Chiefs were put on notice.

Those who did not pledge their fealty to (the missionaries’) ancestor were now said to be punishable by being cast into great fire (*mullela mogul*, in Broadbent’s *Encyclopaedia Permenthes* notes) upon their death. Plowing or

⁴⁶ Robert Moffat to Bible House, London, Kuruman, July 3, 1838, cited by Clement M. Doke, “Scripture Translation,” *African Studies*, 17, 22 (1958), 82–99; and see Bettina Schmidt, *Creating Order: Culture as Politics in 19th and 20th Century South Africa* (Nijmegen, Netherlands: University of Nijmegen, Third World Centre, 1996), 98–100.

⁴⁷ Moffat, in Schapera, *Apprenticeship*, 44.

reaping out of sync with one's neighbors had been a crime; deviating from the will of the A/ancestor was an inner crime, a sin (*modleebe*). Sin, the characteristic of the "refusers," shared a root (*-bi*) with "witchcraft," or at least what missionaries and eventually the British Empire termed witchcraft. The implication was that unconfessed sinners were more than dissidents, that they were malefactors to the imagined body of believers.⁴⁸

At the same time, implicit in Moffat's translational work was a paradoxical acceptance that it was reasonable to see "increase," the growth of one's wealth, crops, cattle, children, and men's power, as *actually* connected to the authority of the chief. For otherwise, his metaphors extolling the fertile power of God made no sense. There was a problem in inscribing the great powers of chiefs as necessary and true, and attacking their actual chiefly performance on the grounds that much of it was an illusion, that chiefs did not have those powers. This contradiction inhered in the adoption of ancestor to mean God. Samuel Broadbent offered "Murimo or Mudeemo" (ancestor) in his lexicon as God, even though, later on, he argued in favor of "Jehovah" instead. In his earliest notes he wrote: *Hare a Murimo* (father-of-ancestor), "God the Father"; *Moro (morwa: son) a Murimo* (son-of-ancestor), "God the Son"; and *Moro a Lirible* (spirit of the shadows[?]), the "Holy Spirit." Work had to be done in this third area, because, as Campbell was told in 1816, *moya* did not unfortunately already mean spirit: "there was no Bootshuana word for soul or spirit, but [only] heart or breath." *Moya* was also what was expelled as voice and so meaning (*lentswe*, also tongue) in a political debate. "They speak of the Soul, 'Moriya.' They say it is in them but know not what it is or that it survives the body," Broadbent wrote.⁴⁹ With the comment that the people knew it not, the missionaries took it up as an eternal spirit.

Consequently the first catechisms established this word as soul and spirit, as premier propositions. Broadbent wrote in his first catechism: "Mudeemo eng? Mudeemo Moya" ("What is God? God is Moya"), a repetition of his first pronouncements. The "life force," now said to outlive the dying body, was, missionaries said, also *moyamowa*. This idea held; Anglican catechisms followed suit, and asserted that there were three *mewa* (plural of *mowa*, breaths) in God.⁵⁰ *Moya* became "the Spirit," never-ending and "without terminus" (*jobosakhutleng*). It is worth noting, however, that alternative usages involving *moyamowa* survived into the twentieth century. One strain of meaning lost to the missionaries may be contemplated in the practice of handling the "chyme" from the first stomach of a killed bull or cow. Between the grasses and the milk and flesh of cattle was this green soup, the exact in-between point in the animal's gut where food became the organism: the world became the herd, and so

⁴⁸ Isak Niehaus, Eliazaar Mohlala, and Kally Shokane, *Witchcraft, Power, and Politics* (London: Pluto Press, 2001); Peter Pels, "The Magic of Africa: Reflections on a Western Commonplace," *African Studies Review*, 41, 3 (1998), 193-210.

⁴⁹ Ruel, *Belief*, 93; but Broadbent confuses Moro (*morwa*) above with *moyo*: Samuel Broadbent, n. 40 above.

⁵⁰ WITS, CPSA, Papers of William Crisp, in a printed catechism from the 1890s, uses *mowa*.

wealth and power, and so more life-force. Thus a man might, during and after a slaughter, touch the organ associated with chyme, a single membrane, to his own *umoyo* or *moya* (throat, breath, chest, voice), or eat it as a special delicacy, with great relish.⁵¹ This dimension the missionaries could not capture.

“In the air” was the medium for *moya*, and “overlordship” was paired with it. As chief Makhaba later observed to Moffat, “from your description of our souls they must resemble God.” Moffat seized on such comments as keen and promising, as even this degree of engagement was rare. Yes, he said, both the soul and God were spirits (*moya*), Air.⁵² All spirits had to reside ultimately somewhere else, not only in the body and mind, but up above, which is where Air was. Moffat wanted to find a natural association between “up” and God, a preexisting substrate – a “superstrate,” so to speak – that made this idea logical and compelling. It was critical to him that “up above” (*legodimong*) was related to the highveld “ancestor” (*modimo*), and that they appeared to share the same root.⁵³ “Ancestor” seemed to belong to this domain, seemed always perhaps to have been an airy being.⁵⁴ Later, Moffat wanted Christians to claim the exclusive use of *zulu* (as “above” or “heaven”), as a holy word, along with other phrases reserved for God. Holding its application to powerful earthly chiefs to be a kind of sacrilege, he begged Mzilikazi to relinquish *zulu* even as a public accolade, but was refused.⁵⁵

As has been noted, the domain of history, and historical narrative, had featured ancestors as past men, and not spirits. Their resolution in memory was ever “fading” (*go dimelela*) into the collectivity’s center, the meeting place of men and cattle, where the notion of them changed into the collective wisdom and imperatives of the court. This cyclical recession involved an erasure, in the town’s central precincts, of the clarity of defining one’s own “self-interest,” and a deepening in its coverage.⁵⁶ At the dawn of Christianity on the highveld

⁵¹ Ruel, *Belief*, 93, 106; and witnessed in rural Lesotho and Botswana, 1990, 1998. Quote: John Campbell, *Travels in South Africa Undertaken at the Request of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 2 (London: LMS/Francis Wesley, 1822), 79 (referring to 1816), and “Station de Motito,” cited above.

⁵² Moffat, in Schapera, *Apprenticeship*, 142.

⁵³ Moffat, 23 June 1835, in Percival R. Kirby (ed.), *Robert Moffat’s Visit to Mzilikazi* (Johannesburg: Johannesburg University Press, 1940), 20; reference also made to Moffat, *Missionary Labours*, 530–1, in Worger, “Parsing God,” 429.

⁵⁴ Any possible root *-dzim originating before the differentiation of S-Group Bantu roots is lost to us in its original meaning. Worger, “Parsing God,” 423, noting Wilhelm H. I. Bleek, *A Comparative Grammar of South African Languages* (London: Trübner and Company, 1862), 91, arguing that Casalis erred in equating the root for “above” (*godimo*) with the “[mo]dim[o]” of the word ancestor, in Eugene Casalis, *Les Bassoutos* (1859), 248–9, trans. as *The Basutos* (Cape Town, London: James Nisbet, 1861); and see David Schoenbrun, “Conjuring the Modern.”

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, n. 54 above.

⁵⁶ Cf. Bruce Bennett, “Suppose a Black Man Tells a Story,” in *Pula* (Special Issue in Honor of Leonard Ngcongco), July 1998; cf. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1991), and John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

in the 1820s, the missionaries were immediately concerned to establish the space and time of their purported power and then to erase the signs of their own creativity, as if that realm had always existed in South African discourse, in a cockeyed pre-version of itself. Like Moffat, Samuel Broadbent remained committed to “in the air” and “spirit” and “soul” as transcendental substances for this continuity. The strategy was to “project” eternal authority into an untouchable universe. This projection, described by the sociologist Emile Durkheim as endemic to primitive man, unfolded as a process: absolute or truest rule was removed outward and pushed away from the chief into “the air” or “into the sky.” It was rendered invulnerable, or as Broadbent wished to say, “spiritual” in nature.⁵⁷

The naturalization of the transcendental clashed with highveld farmers’ unself-consciously commonsensical view of the world. The assertion of “up” in particular was, if anything, taken as a form of bizarre rodomontade, an outsize claim to be able to bring rain: more often Christians were blamed for droughts. But whoever got rain got kudos, and people were willing to give credit where credit was due; if it rained, wars stopped and women got pregnant. As has already been noted, in his very first sermon on the highveld, Broadbent repeated the first line of his Lord’s Prayer, “Hara oa rona u mo ligudimong,” “Our Father(s) who are in the sky,” and asked whether they knew “who was meant by our Father above?,” and was told, “No, ... we do not know who you mean.”⁵⁸ But with their attention to the sky, their reliable possession of tobacco, their monologues about an ancestor, it was only polite, so to speak, to talk about “ancestor,” and to ask the missionaries to make rain with him. “March 21, [1823],” was the date Sefunelo, long expected, finally came to ask Broadbent and Hodgson to bring rain. While there, noted Hodgson, the chief speculated about the nature of God, asking “if he was Air.”⁵⁹ They lectured him about rain, that is, about the impotence of men over weather, and “He was incredulous as to the fact that God alone sent it [rain].” Perhaps this is why Broadbent’s telescope, so often aimed at the heavens, was later on left for him to find, smashed to bits, on the ground.

Recall that Broadbent and Hodgson not only looked up but they also looked down, for water. They successfully pumped water out of a deep hole in the earth. And upon tasting the water, Sefunelo remarked that the pastors were, truly, living under an ancestor not his own, not part of his chiefdom. In his realm, after all, water was public property. It is important to note,

⁵⁷ Emile Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (Trans. and with an Introduction by Karen Fields) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Adam Kuper, *The Invention of Primitive Man* (London: Routledge, 1988), and Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

⁵⁸ WMMS, SOAS ms. collection, Missionaries’ Papers, Box 600, Samuel Broadbent, “Reminiscences,” ms. notebook “Second Part.”

⁵⁹ SAL, Thomas Laidon Hodgson, MSC 39/13, bks 7–12, 7 April 1823. Even air was meant in the gaseous sense: “He has no conception of a Spirit and but little notion of any future state of existence.”

however, that Broadbent translated Sefunelo as commenting that the well proved their deity: “I am sure you have an acquaintance with God.” At the time, in Broadbent’s evocation of a figure “who was first,” or who spawned humanity, there was a subtle backdating of the Lord to the Creator, avoiding his contemplation as a living figure. He is an ancestor, not preeminently an active force in the here and now: “Usiame sandia chotkle” is a botched “Who is good and makes everything”⁶⁰ – the father.

Such nuances helped allow Broadbent to hear “an ancestor” as “God.” No one disrespected the word, at least; they feared it and – as Christians would subsequently say – misused it.⁶¹ After lecturing older men about ancestor in May of 1823, Moffat asked if they knew who had made all things and learned they did not. Did they know anything about “ancestor”? One man replied grudgingly, *kee ueetsee leena haila*, “I know of a name only.” A grammatical reply would have been, “What name? Who was it?” But Moffat translated the man as saying, “Yes, I’ve heard of the word, ‘God’” (ancestor, i.e., *modimo*) – as if ancestor were *already* a way to say God.⁶² This kind of slippage, of imputing translational decisions to target speakers and then appraising their prior usage as incorrect, inhered in what missionaries most basically were about.

With the selection of ancestor for God, there is nevertheless a sense that Moffat, like Broadbent, was resisting what he felt was encroaching upon him, which he could not quite commit to or entirely figure out. He knew the word first appeared in print as God in the populist Reverend James Read’s printing press, after all. What agenda would it foist upon him? Moffat was also a terrible evangelist, and he suspected it was because he did not yet know the language nearly well enough. That would have to change.

CREATING GOD’S KINGDOM, PART 2: CHUIN, 1827

Moffat was not in the habit of frequently conversing with African men and women, or preaching to them, and he well knew his own weakness in Sechuana. Spelled here as he spelled it, Sechuana indicated a much broader purview than its homonym or near-homonym, today’s Setswana.⁶³ In the austral fall of 1827 Moffat decided to “to learn the language,” as his wife Mary wrote in her diary, and he soon rode off, leaving her behind with a few servants. After a typically arduous journey he arrived at Chuin or Chwaing Pan, ninety-six miles northwest of modern Vryburg; and Kongke, “about 20 miles west” of that, where he rendezvoused with a prior acquaintance, a young lord

⁶⁰ Ibid., WMMS, Broadbent, “Reminiscences,” cf. “O siame, a dira tsothe.”

⁶¹ Almost. Moffat reported the existence of a *modimo* worm.

⁶² Moffat, in Schapera, *Apprenticeship*, 82.

⁶³ See Chapter 1, “Journey to Dithakong: Missionaries, Métis, and Bechuana North of the Orange (‘Great’) River.” Moffat first preached with no interpreter in August, 1827: Schapera, *Apprenticeship*, 267; Mary Moffat to Robert Moffat, Dithakong, 28 August 1827.

named Bogachu. Moffat came “alone,” meaning with no other Europeans, and no interpreter.⁶⁴

In these Kalahari-edge salt pans, a week’s travel from anywhere, where the veld was sparse but wide open for grazing, Bogachu and several “captains” or “chiefs” had small encampments, akin to many lords’ seasonally inhabited “cattle post” homes in peacetime. They were too small to draw the notice of Mzilikazi’s or MmaNtathisi’s patrols. They were settled four miles away from the nearest springs, to which the men dispatched their women to fetch water; such was convenient, they told Moffat, because they (the men) had found the precise kind of brush nearby that they needed to make their favorite kraal fences. A dozen or so miles away was a settlement called Setabeng, where Chief Gonntse held court. Bogachu’s “cousin” Lekomenyane lived with Bogachu and other lords ostensibly oriented toward Sefunelo and the Seleka (people-of-*rolong*) chiefship, as did one Pifo and his bereft *ba-rotse* household. Moffat thus encountered, in the dry place-of-salt, a masculinized environment of roughly ranked peers.

Moffat greeted Pifo, “Air” or “Wind,”

with peculiar feelings, reflecting, as I did, on the events which have scattered and peeled that once industrious and interesting tribe *to which he belonged*. ‘Where are the Baharutse? was my first question. “Destroyed by the Mantatees, and a few scattered,” was his reply, *with the emphasis of heart-feeling*.⁶⁵

Pifo was the former ambassador from Diutlwileng, the regent chief at Kaditshwene, the old prestige-place (*ba-rotse*) nexus on the highveld, to Mothibe at Dithakong. Moffat’s encounter with Pifo in the middle of nowhere, with “peculiar feelings,” and “heart-feeling,” established a kind of community for him, one he had previously resisted as he played inquisitor and teacher. He began to see eye to eye with these men, as he once had among the rural Boers of the temperate Cape.⁶⁶

It has been noted that in times of war, especially, cattle and other masculine pursuits ascended over women and agriculture. Women, the idled sorghum producers and household-rulers of the highveld, found little purchase in Chuin. In keeping with this principle, during Moffat’s two-month stay in the salt pans, a man murdered his wife with his spear, and the gathered court of senior men thought Moffat was joking when he asked them to punish the killer; and Bogachu himself assaulted his wife with an axe, wounding her badly in the leg. As Moffat became close to the men, incidents involving gunfire and killing helped bind him to them severally: particularly an attack on the oxen by a lion, in which he and the métis wagoner fired their rifles, and his hunting and trackings with Bogachu and Lekomenyane. These men showed Moffat “unwonted kindness”; Lekomenyane gave Moffat a sewn

⁶⁴ Moffat, in Schapera, *Apprenticeship*, and other material from this and the section following: 241–60, April 4, to June 11, 1827.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 241, entry for April 5. The odd underlinings are Moffat’s own.

⁶⁶ Neil Parsons on Kurrechane and Kaditshwene, personal communication, 1998.

handkerchief for Mary and asked Moffat to send for his hunting dog to make him feel more at ease. Moffat in turn took them as the nearest thing to friends he had among the people of the highveld.⁶⁷

In 1824, the Cape Colony unilaterally extended its northern boundary to the Orange River, and its racist pass laws with it. The lords of Chuin were however already men of the borderlands. Bogachu and his people spoke a smidgen of Dutch, and Lekomenyane wished to go to work “for white men”; he was either on furlough from such employ or knew men who were. Both he and Bogachu hunted proficiently with firearms and knew how to handle gunpowder. They smoked pipes and they wore hats. Most of all, they had already had opportunities to learn about Christians, and knew what to expect.

Bogachu, scarcely past adolescence, was already negotiating his subchiefdom’s future within the neighborhoods of the (deceased chiefs) Tshidi, Ratlou, Ngwaketse, and Seleka, the chiefdoms in their names, and the apparently friendly British power behind Moffat. He is described in a particularly clumsy “linguistically correct” ethnic formula by Isaac Schapera: he belonged to “the royal family of the BaRolong-booSeleka (Sehunêlô’s people),” and elsewhere Schapera implies he was the son or brother of a Seleka chief.⁶⁸ There is room to doubt it. The name Bogachu was proper to a chiefly lineage rooted in the Caledon Valley, far from the path being traced by Sefunelo. A youth of fourteen named Bogachu appears in the records of the Methodist church in 1817, and his status then was not a “person of Seleka” but that of a visitor to the region. Young men dressed and acted differently for different communities. In the same period, Moletsane’s documented switches of dialect and clothing-style depended on whether he wished to appear as a person of *rolong*, or of the “Dihoya” (or “lihoya”), or Korana, or Basuto.⁶⁹

The 1820s were a time when many people changed their allegiances. If Bogachu and his peers were figures of hybridity (even *métissage*) accustomed to borderlands life, they also, relatedly, headed competing people-of-*rolong* chiefly houses, which hoped to vacuum up the pieces of *rotse*-place and crocodile chiefdoms as they built towns or town sections under ambitious chiefs. Bogachu and his cohort lived at the intersection, in the 1820s, of Cape evangelical connections, incipient administration, and the slaving hinterland of Boers and métis. They could make any number of choices.

Moffat, after his encounter with Pifo described earlier, spent his first days visiting a *ha-rotse* blacksmith, and on Sunday, April 8, he gathered “the people” to preach. In contrast to his interesting discussions with Pifo and the

⁶⁷ Schapera, *Apprenticeship*, 266–7: Robert Moffat to Mary Moffat, Dithakong, May 11, 1827.

⁶⁸ I have not tracked down a Bogachu or Seleka genealogy possibly existing in Isaac Schapera’s typewritten fieldnotes. S. M. Molema, *Chief Moroka: His Life, His Times and His People* (Cape Town: Methodist Publishing House, 1951) in the 1920s gave Bogachu’s father as Motlhwane, a repeated family name, who was “Moroka’s half-uncle,” 146.

⁶⁹ Arbousset and Daumas, *Narrative*, 212; Etherington, *The Great Treks*, 137–8. There is also a Bogachu connected with Moilwa’s ruling house at Kaditshwene.

blacksmith, when he preached directly “everything was turned to ridicule,” until he ended the mockery and spoke about death and dying, which sent his audience away. “They rehearse my crooked speeches with violent bursts of laughter,” he reflected. His respite was to retire again

a couple of hours at the house of Piho the Moharutse. It afforded me much pleasure to be enabled to tell him and his domestic a few of the truths of divine revelation. I made him a present of some beads.... [I assured him] that at some future period, perhaps not very distant, a mission would be commenced at Kurecheune [*sic*: probably Kaditshwene], which appeared to afford him the utmost pleasure, [and] he remarked that the scattered Baharutse would collect.⁷⁰

Again, Moffat found meaning with Pifo, in the midst of otherwise failing, humiliating, nonengagement, by saying, in passable Sechuana, that he hoped to help effect the restoration of a great prestige-place (*ba-rotse*) kingdom. The next day he went blinds hunting with Bogachu. When the moon rose, the two men led their horses to a place where Moffat was able to shoot a rhinoceros, and they tracked it, and Moffat bore down upon it and shot it again at close range, and then “directed the Barolongs to dispatch him with their spears.” Moffat was given the meat, but he bestowed the greater part of it on Bogachu as a gift, recognizing his subordination to Bogacho and so cementing his protection in Kongke and Chuin.

Moffat went back blandly to observing blacksmithy, trying occasionally to preach with uncertain effect. As he grew to understand more around him, he was disturbed to note, besides the obvious disapproval with which people greeted his words, several discernible distortions. “I was much grieved to hear them making a kind of diversion of some part of the discourse, particularly that which related to a future state of reward,” to H/heaven, in other words. “I went and placed myself among them, and resumed the subject in a way of argument; when they changed their tone, especially when I dwelt on the article of death, to them a subject ... the most unpleasant.”⁷¹

This was the cycle as we have seen. Moffat typically felt “low” and “down” after such encounters. While “Our Lord” translated most simply as “Kosse a choane” (Broadbent), “our chief,” this Kosse (*kgosi*) was also the chief of the dead, or of what happened to you when you died. If the “where” question was answered by “up above,” the “when” question was not only the elliptical “soon,” but also, and very precisely, “after you are dead.”⁷² Heaven was not an easy idea to convey.

A few days later, on 17 April, Moffat felt “better,” somehow, and began to turn a corner. He began to show an interest in subjects “of a worldly nature” and complained of drowning in “a superabundance of names,” “despairing

⁷⁰ Moffat, in Schapera, *Apprenticeship*, 244; Moffat, *Missionary Labours*, 248 ff., 10 April 1827.

⁷¹ Moffat, in Schapera, *Apprenticeship*, 246, 15 April.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 141, referring to Makhaba of the people-of-Ngwaketse realm.

of ever becoming perfect.” In other words, he was hammering at the barrier before the entrance into the world of *thinking* in the language; and despite his protestations, interaction in Sechuana afforded him “considerable pleasure” (to hear the news that some métis traders were coming, and that the people-of-Ngwaketse chief had driven away “the marauders”), such that we might read beyond his protests. Moffat in this very short period fully transcended his racism. He permitted Bogachu even more than Pifo to be his equal, “deferring” to Bogachu on the subject of religion, maintaining a “silence” on the subject, without drawing judgment down upon him, as he did with ordinary interlocutors. Moffat esteemed his highveld friend not as a Christian, but as a person.⁷³

While Moffat professed to be frustrated that he had no one to tell him the “real meaning” of words, it would have been harder to form such attachments if there had been a translator by his side. With none such, and no glossary in his pocket, Moffat wrote down words and phrases as well as he could. Then he listened “to hear them in another conversation,” understanding from the context what one conversation had in common with another, until finally he used the phrase(s) himself in a further interaction. In short Moffat learned new dimensions of Sechuana by living the situations in which words signified, by sharing in experience, and only then writing provisional definitions. Only when he was compelled to operate in this way, in a world of speaking and hearing, did highveld ideas begin making sense; and only then did they threaten to displace his mother-tongue’s exclusive claim on his being, and frighten him.

Moffat continued to preach every day, to dwell on death and individual salvation, ending as usual on the “certainty of death.” In this way he hoped to open up “after death” as a space for the Christian when and where. Only the coming of the kingdom of God on earth slowed down his audience’s usually mournful exit. About a “dozen” women, the wives of headmen and chiefs, stayed round him, and he spoke about what was “coming,” what was “near” or “close at hand.” An unknown figure, who was the son and also the father, was coming in this lifetime. “‘Tend the herd,’ he [Christ] says, ‘Prepare yourselves,’ because it is near, it is coming.” When such words were spoken, what did they mean? Moffat also said the “bones on the field” would rise up and come to life. “The bones of the dead?” Makhaba of the Ngwaketse chiefdom queried him – the dead cut down in battle? He asked three times. Each time Moffat said, “Yes.” An ancestor would return to this life, and with him all the others. Moffat directly attached the immortal nature of the soul to such a future order. He thus spoke of the “coming of Christ, the events of that day, and the burning of the world and all things therein.” In Setabeng, in the Chuin salt pans, talking to women wrapped in blankets, Moffat sketched this Pre-Millennialist, apocalyptic vision and noticed that some of them “seemed really alarmed,” even “afraid of the dreadful event” – the destruction of the world – “taking place at that moment.”

⁷³ Ibid., 264: Robert to Mary Moffat, “Chuin,” April 25, 1827.

One of them begged “to be able to pray,” and Moffat unfolded a short text he had composed for the purpose.⁷⁴

THE CONUNDRUM OF JESUS CRUCIFIED AND RETURNING

The problem of death occupied Moffat. He recognized that everything depended on his grasp of the “infinite” as opposed to the worldly, the unseen as opposed to the sensuous. But his targeted heathens lived only in this world. He had “tried to enter into their views and feelings by building an adamantine wall between me and immortality,” but he could not, finding it impossible to “view life in this world except in connection with the life to come.”⁷⁵ The adamantine wall was of course itself death. Only by acknowledging it as an impermeable barrier as highveld people did could he understand and speak to them. Christ’s expected return (“soon”) solved this problem because it united the spiritual world with this one, among the living. It may not have been enough, however, for Moffat retreated a little from his own translation into highveld lifeways, and on 26 April, he left Setabeng and went to Kongke.

At Kongke, in a few scattered hamlets, the men snubbed him, and no women at all would come to see him preach. In Chief Gonnitse’s domain, only Gonnitse listened attentively. The worst of it was that Moffat’s assertions still often elicited laughter, sometimes hilarity. Other missionaries too were treated like jesters and mocked. Like Moffat Broadbent made cumbersome efforts to locate prior knowledge of his super-figures. “Of JC they know nothing,” he finally acknowledged, making children shriek with glee.⁷⁶ In particular the “doctrine of the Cross was a subject of loud laughter.” Listeners choked back their guffaws, teared up, stumbled away. Why? Was this the laughter of difference without name, the shock of the unknown? I would argue that it was more than that.

The most powerful ancestor of all, the “great chief,” supplied his only son, an unmarried adult man, to be tortured to death. But usually a powerful ancestor is one to whom, *by definition*, the chief and prominent men traced their paternal heritage! Who was and is the greatest such, according to Christians? The answer, via the crucifixion, was “the one with ... no living descendents.” Such a call-and-response formula thus took the form of a joke, absurdly switching public and private transcripts, legitimate and illegitimate commentary. Highveld people understood that sub rosa alternative traditions told varying tales about the parentage of classified brothers, but conventions were normally observed. The Christians, in their ostensibly legitimizing mode,

⁷⁴ It is not known which prayer, but see Prepare: Yesia 40:3: “... lo re, Bakanyan tsela ea Yehova,” and John: “Siamisang tsela ya Yehova,” from Robert Moffat, “Likaelo tse ri Tlaocoen mo Likualon tsa Morimo,” 1841, published by the LMS at Kuruman; and Robert Moffat, “Go Disa Gale,” Hymn 329, in *Dihela tsa Tihelo ea Modimo* (by Robert Moffat and “Baruti Ba Bangwe”) (London: LMS, 1894), 250 ff.; and for “three times ... bones,” Moffat, *Missionary Labours*, 579.

⁷⁵ Moffat, in Schapera, *Apprenticeship*, 248–9, 22 April.

⁷⁶ WMMS, Broadbent, “Reminiscences,” date misplaced.

said the greatest ancestor is not an “ancestor” to me or you *at all*, as he had no offspring he allowed to live. His essential name, “ancestor,” was turned inside out and emptied of ordinary meaning.

When God gave his son “for” humanity, furthermore, he did not seem so very powerful; at the moment of his signature gesture, he grieved. There is a bit of evidence that highveld people had seen a rendering of Christ before, perhaps a crucifix or image from the 1700s or earlier, coming down from the plantations on the Zambesi River. Some people of *F/fokeng* referred to a “one-legged one” or a “wounded” hero figure in lore. But even if so, little more than this misprision was retained.⁷⁷ Jesus, or the nonsense sounds, “*dzeb-zuss kereseti*,” unlike names in Sechuana had no natural meaning and was problematic therein. A son with this alien name, taking precedence over the father, counseling passivity, dying without a struggle, returning as an act of salvation enfleshed – these were knotty messages. That the Son died “for” one’s sins was clearly paramount, and yet posed especial difficulties, as it was a literate kind of relationship, a fixed substitution meant to operate independently of context.⁷⁸ If a good deal of “the message” or “the word” (*lefoko*) was new, especially about Jesus, ancestor(s) were by definition old, and chiefship was understood by all highveld people.

CREATING GOD’S KINGDOM, PART 3: BEYOND HA-ROTSE

As the weeks passed in Chuin ([*le*]tshwaing, place of salt), Moffat’s mood went up and down, depending on visitors, letters, and other things. He aimed bad sermons at indifferent people and noted that they parroted back what he wanted to hear. If they were asked “what their wish would be on their deathbed, they of course answer, ‘to go to heaven,’” just as they would say anything for “a piece of tobacco.” With chiefs he fared better. The people-of-Ngwaketse chief Sebege came to visit Moffat and they were able to speak to each other. In the company of Pifo, Moffat brought up the subject of the “poor Baharutsees” (Pifo’s people) and spoke earnestly on the topic. Sebege was initially rather cold. He asked Moffat what attraction he saw in that “poor and dispersed people.” Moffat said, or “rejoined,” that “that was one of the reasons for my desiring to fix a mission among them,” and here we must bear in mind that Moffat actually intended no such mission:

I sympathised with them in their distresses, and if the Wankets [Ngwaketse chiefship] were in similar circumstances, I should feel the same towards them, and cheerfully go and live among them, for the sake of restoring them to their former comfortable condition.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Portuguese: J. M. Schofeleers, *Guardians of the Land: Essays on Central African Territorial Cults* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1978).

⁷⁸ Jack Goody, *Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 99, alluding to Egyptian Onamastica.

⁷⁹ Moffat, in Schapera, *Apprenticeship*, 256, 25 April. Another missionary society did commence a mission to people of *ha-rotse*.

In a sense, Moffat was no longer talking about Kaditshwene, nor Ngwakentse-place, but was instead talking about “returned” kingdoms in general, in the same vocabulary Broadbent (not he) had adopted in translating the Lord’s Prayer. The previous “pleasure” and then empathy discovered in his interaction with Pifo was removed and rendered abstract. In reaction to this discourse, Sebego, the people-of-Ngwaketse chief, “put his hand on his mouth (a token of wonder), and turned to his brother Mangala,” and said that Moffat had “a heart.” Moffat could scarcely avoid noting the contrast to people’s irritated miens when he spoke about death and personal culpability. He would increasingly stick to questions about belonging, and peace, and chiefship, in this time of turmoil.

On Wednesday, 30 April, Moffat for the final time visited Pifo. “I always feel some degree of pleasure in my visits to his house. He has lost a wife and four children, who were killed by the Mantatees; his cattle were also all taken.” Pifo’s yearning for his old life, grasped in terms of Moffat’s own pining for his family, created their fragile common ground. It was about “restoration.”

He always seems to hear divine things with interest, but nothing so much arrests his attention, and cheers his spirits, as to tell him that the Makoas [whites] love the Baharutse, and that they will be one day in possession of the land of their forefathers.

These interactions were effectively experiments in evangelism, investigating nostalgia for a lost prestige-place (*ba-rotse*) propriety for usable material. It is significant that the Kaditshwene people in their ruin were everywhere known merely as (of) or (place of) *rotse*, as people from “Baharutse country,” as it was often put, and rarely under the name of subsequent ancestors or chiefs.⁸⁰ Perhaps because *rotse* irredentism might be generally expressed, its political language gave color and content to Moffat’s seminal depiction of Christianity’s promise for what was To Come.

Christians’ verbal creation of the soon-to-be order, which was also akin somehow to the great ancestral domain, and a life of peace and prosperity, postulated no named ancestor, no single historical chief. Moffat would tiptoe on the edge of “divine things,” and speak the language of actual rule, success, and growth. If he could seize restorationist fantasy and provoke the feelings he noted in Pifo, he might yet make his kind of talk grow: he might take ancestor, chief, prestige-place-association nostalgia, and rain, and make it all into “Christianity.”

If *modimo* or ancestor were to be God, the realm of *an unnamed ancestor* was at first precisely the same thing as the realm of God. The restoration of Christ’s kingdom on earth was put in the same terms: the restoration of an ancestor as chief. Ancestor still meant ancestor: restoration meant restoration.

⁸⁰ Cory Library (Cory), MS 1116, ms. journals of the Reverend Francis Owen, signed 24 June 1839 (thanks to Sandy Rowoldt-Shell). According to Campbell, the “Wanteksens,” or people of Ngwaketse, were killing and enslaving *rotse*-place associated people, and Thulare, the “Maroteng” chief, raided *ba-rotse* settlements to found the people-of-Pedi chiefdom: Delius, *This Land Belongs to Us*, 22.

In a time of uncertain authority, it was impolitic to talk about named ancestors, specifically, without heeding one's current situation. To do so would be to appear to speak the language of opposition or even insurgency. The polite thing was to leave the pronoun vague, or just say "them." Indeed it may well have been Bogachu, Lekomenyane, and Pifo, at the edge of borderlands violence, who persuaded Moffat to embrace the usage of ancestor as God. They adjusted their genealogical claims in their own interests, rendering their "greatest ancestor" temporarily anonymous. Moffat made a religion out of it.

METAPHORS

Let us look for a moment longer at the problem Moffat confronted in conveying his notion of the domain of the sacred, into highveld speech in the Chuin salt pans. As we have seen, he diagnosed his troubles by suggesting there was a deficiency in "theological terms" in Sechuana: no surprise, perhaps, since he judged them as preresligious, but the problem was deeper than this. Not only was there no "temple" or "altar" or other "emblem of heathen worship." There were no "metaphors" for stable, respected, omnipotent rule. There were, as Moffat put it, no "crowns, thrones, and sceptres here," nothing similar to medieval Catholic icons with which to depict the Protestant God's "majesty."⁸¹ He viewed this deficit as a tribal quality, unrelated to the history he himself was then witnessing: the wartime hypermobilization of men, the violence, the seasonal community upheavals.

It is interesting that Moffat concentrated on translating Isaiah before other parts of the Old Testament:

Your country lies desolate
 Your cities are burned with fire:
 In your very presence
 Aliens devour your land (1:7)
 ...
 Deep from the earth you shall speak ...
 From low in the dust your words shall come
 Your voice shall come from the ground like the voice of a ghost
 And your speech shall whisper out of the dust. (29:4)

In centralized, disciplined kingdoms, Moffat could not find a foothold; but in chaos, he made allies. On the highveld in the 1820s, sans Chief Mothibe, no "crown," no "lion" (or *tau*) immediately opposed him.⁸²

Like Broadbent, Moffat was able to stress the "king" (or "chief," *-kosi* and variants) idea within ancestor because of the distressed state of the highveld.

⁸¹ Worger, "Parsing God," and Comaroff, *Of Revelation*, Vol. 1, 161 (recognizing the place of chiefship in Christian imaginings), and 202, citing Moffat, *Missionary Labours*, 243-4.

⁸² The *rotse* chieftom created in Zambia by the "MmaKololo" men's alliance, inherited by Lewanika, *did* possess an ebony throne carved with crocodiles and leopards (Baltimore Museum of Art).

Relations of power were upfront in his formulations. Samuel Broadbent explained God to Sefunelo as follows: “There is a King of Kings, Modeema, to whom all Kings and people must hereafter give an account of their conduct.”⁸³ In the era before the Queen of England became the sovereign of so many African chiefs, such assertions prepared people’s societies for reduction to a lesser register. The blueprint was to extoll no particular chiefdom, not Mengwe’s or Tshawe’s or Molehabangwe’s or any real ancestor’s, but all of them: a domain when the rains came regularly, and peace lay on the land. Fashioning the domain in this general way, Moffat’s and Broadbent’s earliest translations emphasized the Kingdom’s ethereal nature, the spiritual essence of their ancestor and father, and the moral quality of its space.

For most real chiefs, however, Christianity was too close for comfort. In order to understand how close were the political and religious fields of meaning, still sewn together underneath, so to speak, at this juncture, consider the three terms Moffat said were missing on the highveld: “crowns, thrones, and sceptres.” If they were “missing,” he nonetheless searched for their analogues, and the words appear in his Bible, in the Proverbs, Psalms, and Gospels. For crowns, Moffat offered “hat,” or “headkerchief,” or “bundle” worn on the head (*serwalo*) – “of the *chiefship*” (Prov. 24:21). Alternatively, crown was “headkerchief of life” (Rev. 2:10) or (in one special case) “of thorns” (Matt. 27:29); throne was plain “stool of the chiefship” or “stool of the chiefship of ancestor,” although here Moffat also tried a neologism *terone* for God’s throne, “the chief rules on his throne of goodness,” *khosi e e lulan mo teronen ea tsiamisho*. Sceptre was just “the stick of [the] chiefship.” Consider Psalm 45:6 in Moffat’s Bible: “Your men’s court-stool of chiefship is without limit and without end; your stick of chiefship is fair and evenhanded.”⁸⁴

The simple idea of *chiefship* served, in most Christian metaphors that evoked God’s rule, to replace other potential tropes equally natural to highveld speech. In particular, one notes that Moffat did not do nearly as much with grace, or brotherhood and sisterhood. And while he made use of some basic agrarian and first-fruit ceremonial metaphors, in critical places he simply went to chiefship, attaching it to stick, stool, or kerchief to create awkward, hybrid translations that could not then themselves turn about and help express the nature of (the) ancestor, save to emphasize the element of chiefship. Once ancestor (*modimo*) became God (Modimo), chiefship was all that Moffat, a reasonable non-native-speaker, could talk about. Without it, the “things” of

⁸³ Broadbent, *Narrative*, 84, and the next two quotes; Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation*, Vol. 1, 258.

⁸⁴ *Serwalo sa bogosi, serwalo sa botshelo, serwalo sa mitwa; setulo sa bogosi and setulo sa gago sa bogosi*, in Ps. 89:4, and *setulong sa bogosi* in Hebrews 4:16, Hebrews 12:2. *Serwalo* meant something put on the head or back, from *go rwala*, to wear or don. *Setulo sa gago sa bogosi se nntse ka bosenabokbutlo le ca boseenkae; thobane ea bogosi yoa gago ke thobane ea teka-tekanyo*, translated into English by me. All citations to *Dibela*, 1894 (based on Moffat’s editions) and Proverbs 20:8, Yesia from “Mahuku a Morimo” (1842) and “Mahuku a Morimo mo puon ya Secuana” (1847) and “Likaelo” (1841), held at the SOAS library.

the chief of all chiefs had no more meaning than in Falstaff's drunken offer to act as Henry IV's father: "this chair shall be my state, this dagger my sceptre, and this cushion my crown" (Prince Henry: "Thy state is taken for a joined-stool"). Such items required chiefship – not the other way around.

IN SUM: TRANSLATION AS TRANSFORMATION

With "Mudeemo" as God, it had to be *emphasized* that he was supreme – here is Broadbent – that "there was, and could be but one, Mudeemo, [and] that He is Eternal." This was critical because in fact there were very many chiefs: ancestral ones, mythical ones, current rulers friendly and hostile. It was troubling that one use of "ancestor" seems to have been to denote that which had been returned to the earth, or "proceeded from beneath some mountain," in Broadbent's glum prose. And even amid vigorous assertions that "ancestor" was a "great chief," once the potency of the word appeared to rise, its uses only multiplied and proliferated.

I have suggested that missionaries made naming and realizing "the name" one act, a necessary lapse in consciousness in which their authorship was denied. In his evangelism Moffat first fit preexisting words into new contexts, hoping "Morimo ke Moya" became "God is a Spirit," the more he spoke and prayed. After a while, he could no longer hear "ancestor" as anything but "God." Nor Broadbent: "They speak ... [of] 'Moreemo,'" Broadbent wrote, "but know nothing of him; but of being the author of everything great or wonderful. [O]f everything they think is more than man could do, they say God has done it."⁸⁵ Notice the slippage again from Moreemo to God: they spoke about *x* but knew nothing of *X*. When Moffat suggested to a traveling rain specialist that he renounce his work, the rain-maker politely responded that they fathomed different things, because their *ancestors were different*: his was from the north (from within Africa), whereas Moffat's was in the south, the Colony. Moffat heard these words as the blasphemy of polytheism, and said no, there was only one God. Soon enough Moffat was implying that a high being (derived in his teleology from *godimo*, "high") had been degraded and "lowered," blasphemously forgotten, until it/He became (in local usage) "a loathsome thing," or "something evil ... *in the ground*," made such by ignorance and Satanic influence. The task became to uncover how people misunderstood their own words, in their own usages, so that they might be shown how to know them more truly.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Samuel Broadbent, in *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 68, pt. 2 (1845), 340, held at Oxford University.

⁸⁶ Alverson, *Mind*, 125–6; LMS, S.A. corr. 8/1/A, Moffat to LMS 16 April 1819. Other sources: Clement Doke, *Zulu-English Dictionary* (Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand, 1958); Andrew Smith, *The Diary of Sir Andrew Smith, 1834–1836*, 2 vols., ed. P. R. Kirby (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck, 1939), 93; Max Gluckman, "Kinship and Marriage among the Lozi of Northern Rhodesia and the Zulu of Natal," in A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryl Forde, eds., *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

Moffat's seizure of "text," of the high ground in the realm of meaning, followed shortly. The texts that emerged after 1819 included an elementary spelling book set to type on a small press by Hodgson's and Broadbent's replacement, James Archbell, in 1825, of which Moffat ordered 1,000 copies. Beginning with some of common low-church "catechisms," and next a "selection of passages of scripture" by a popular author, Moffat applied himself to translation. Psalms and other material came out in small printings, but only after his return from Chuin did Moffat tackle a complete Luke. This he set to print in 1829.⁸⁷

Diverging from its plural thenceforth, ancestor as God, *sui generis*, would occupy its own exclusive grammatical noun-class, a perpetual Singular. The restoration of the lost kingdom, where everything had its place, could not actually be; but it remained as a recognizable shape for desire to cleave to. In the language of Moffat's Christianity, the sinners were those left behind (*lathega*), suffering the fate of those who could not keep up, who could not find a home. A turn away from grace would produce a stray heifer (*timelo*), and refuseniks (*gana*) were those who kept themselves apart (*ikepa*). To be saved would be to be gathered, collected like cattle and people under a just king; to be blessed would be to be "gourd-anointed" as the chief anointed himself in the harvest rite (*segofatsa*) – a ceremony popularly connected to *rotse*-place centrality. To be gathered indicated justice, because highveld wards could move away, if they wished, and form new relationships of brotherhood and alliance. For Moffat and for those preaching his Gospels' words, Christ was the herder (*modise*) and anointer, rectifying sinners, offering them a promised, eventual home.

The single idea, ancestor, fragmented into past errors about God, parents, and chiefs of the past. Ancestors burned in hellfire as "souls" and they were Satan himself (as "Bareemo" or *badimo*); and later, ancestors were represented as demons, also given phonetically (and confusingly) as *badimone*. Only the coming of the Millennium, when God, in the person of his Son, returned as a chief, would restore all of it to coherence: then the ancestors would return to the world in a shining chiefdom.

Establishment Christian missions introduced millenarianism into the very fabric of Christianity. An end was assumed to be coming to the speaking of political words in the ways already known to men. People were to wait. Those

1950), 166–206; Thomas Arbousset, *Missionary Excursion into the Blue Mountains*, ed. and trans. David Ambrose and A. Brutsch (Moriya: Museum and Archives, 1991), 90; and Axel-Ivar Berglund, *Zulu Thought-Patterns and Symbolism* (London: C. Hurst, 1976), 34 ff.; Moffat, *Missionary Labours*, 257–8; and Ruel, *Belief*, 150.

⁸⁷ Moffat, in Schapera, *Apprenticeship*, 281–2; see also *Missionary Labours*, the single volume edition, 369, 486. My date of 1829 is contradicted by Clement Doke, an authority who offers 1830 in "Scripture Translation," 85. See also Gerald West, "Early Encounters with the Bible among the Batlhaping: Historical and Hermeneutical Signs," *Biblical Interpretation*, 12, 3 (2004), 251–81. Brownlee and Jan Tzatzoe at this time translated but did not publish Mark (Roger Levine, pers. comm., 12/7/09).

calling themselves Christians, *and* taking action to change the world here and now, were “frauds” and were to be shut down by proper authorities.⁸⁸ The faithful invoked a kingdom set in the “shadow play,” the “air,” or “up,” which was “long, long ago” (or in the “great greatness”), after death, and otherwise (with the second coming) “very soon.” Of course, by such means Christians’ power was inscribed in the present, too.

⁸⁸ Moffat, in Schapera, *Apprenticeship*, 51 (1822).

The Incipient Order (Moroka's reign, 1828–1880)

In the nineteenth century, colonialism brought missionaries and literacy and religion and ethnic division to the highveld. It also brought about a dramatic transformation in people's access to the land. This change modulated the way ordinary people were able to orient themselves toward collective ends, conceived in the terms explored in earlier chapters. Chiefship, ranked alliances (including "twin courts"), prestige-place associations (*ba rotse, rolong*, crocodile), and the idea of sharing a paternal ancestor – these ideas continued to structure people's mobilizations. Shifting, diminishing access to land helped determine how, and in what form, their communities survived.

The approach taken in this chapter is to consider a large part of the century, 1828–1880, while focusing increasingly on the southern highveld and on popular mobilizations that sprang from it, in the era of conquests, enclosures, and privatizations. The period also indicates precisely the reign of Chief Moroka, Sefunelo's son and heir, and the last of the independent chiefs of the southern highveld. The greatest of the material changes in people's lives came toward the end of this half-century.

As a preliminary, we may note the continuing heterogeneity of highveld life in the 1830s. As men and women struggled to protect their access to land under attack, they also absorbed and accommodated distant kin, orphans of famines or commando razzias. Moroka welcomed his old ally, the people-of-Tshidi court, to his vicinity, one of many chiefdoms fleeing the "zulu" Matebele. Together they formed a twin court, while other towns and centers hosted other hybridities. Philippolis was the London Missionary Society's model community for mixed and post-slave settlers, created by the Reverend John Philip; in a contiguous settlement of squared yards and a schoolhouse, there were fifty "Bechuana" households and twenty or twenty-five "Griqua" ones. The Sechuana language was said to be required for "serious missionary work" in the town.¹

¹ Karel Schoeman, ed., *The Griqua Captaincy of Philippolis, 1826–61* (Pretoria: Protea, 2002), 101–2, 118–9; quote: Gottlob Schreiner, in Schoeman, ed., *The Wesleyan Mission in the*

The most prominent Griqua settlement on the Orange River nominally subject to Philippolis was the village of Piet Sahba, formerly among the Christians at Ramah. Sahba took several wives and was excommunicated by the Society, but he remained a teacher. He is described as “a native” by Andrew Smith, and as a “Griqua-Hottentot” by German missionaries. According to John Melvill, writing in his journal, Sahba’s village, or “*werf*,” consisted of “12 Griqua and 17 Bechuana families,” all melded into “Griqua,” he implies, by their attendance at the church’s Dutch-language sermons. In Melvill’s own classroom in Philippolis there were sixty-two children: eight Bushmen, twenty-six “Boochwana,” and twenty-eight Griqua.²

Ethnicity both emerged and subsided in these hierarchical domains. At the junction of the Harts and the Vaal lay a town in which “the chief men of the place were Grikwas, the rest Korana and Bechuana.” Chief Mahura’s *tlhaping* (place-of-fish) domain was made of thousands of people of diverse origin, as was widely understood. In the east, close to Bethulie, the Paris Evangelical Society mission, Andrew Smith described a “native town” of five or six thousand inhabitants. Alongside the usual Khoel- and métis components, houses were “crowded together” in independent, equal sections. The major surnames were of place-of-fish descent, others “Barolong” or “Basuto.”³

There is no reason to think this phenomenon of hybridity and realpolitik was a recent invention. On the contrary, prestige-place (*ha-rotse*, etc.) associations had encouraged *métissage* in alliances and marriages long before the Cape Colony’s métis offspring entered their horizons.⁴ The leaders of the 1830s continued to follow the flexible contours of the highveld political tradition. In a few places, as we have seen, strings of ranked alliances joined together to become large chiefdoms. *Lesotho* or the place of the Basuto was one such; Moroka’s chiefdom for a while seemed like it might be another.

The argument here will be, first, that the highveld’s political modality came under sustained discursive *and* material attack beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century. British and Boer colonialism(s) and the privatization of land were the most important factors in eroding the power of chiefs, and strengthening ethnicity and Christianity. Second, where the highveld’s political tradition persisted was in the reoccupation of the language of tribe and religion in order to speak about land and autonomy. In the last third of the chapter, as centuries of highveld independence drew to a close, the focus is

Orange Free State, 1833–1854: As Described in Contemporary Accounts (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1991), 107.

² LMS, SA, Journals, Box 4, Melvill, 13/4/1827, and 13/7/1827; Karel Schoeman, *Griqua Captivity*, 122, 119, citing the *Journal of the Berlin Missionary Society* from 1836.

³ WMMS, S.A. corr., Broadbent, Maquassie, June 8, 1823. Ramah Spring on the Orange River was established in 1816 as a Bushman mission.

⁴ Percival R. Kirby, *Sir Andrew Smith, 1797–1850* (Cape Town: A. A. Balkema, 1965), 144; and William F. Lye, ed., *Andrew Smith’s Journal of His Expedition into the Interior of South Africa, 1834–1836* (Cape Town: Balkema, 1975), 20, 118, 134, 148, cited in Norman Etherington, *The Great Treks: The Transformation of Southern Africa, 1815–54* (London: Pearson

Moroka's chiefship and the politics of succession at his death. In a transcribed hearing from 1880, tribe and race are revealed as components not only of administrators' discourse, but ipso facto in the calculations of African peasants, as other understandings of political authority moved into eclipse.

THE VALLEY OF THE MIDDLE RIVER

Mzilikazi's famous Matebele warriors subordinated tens of thousands of Sechuana-speakers, building a formidable state apparatus. As noted, the chiefship of Tawana, of the people of Tshidi, fled Mzilikazi, going south, and joined Moroka in comprising the settlement at Platberg with the local métis people.⁵ The chiefship effectively passed to Moroka there, several years before his father Sefunelo died. Tawana's people recognized Moroka as their de facto senior, while Moroka recognized Tawana and his line as his genealogical and symbolic seniors. The notion of the senior court, relinquishing territorial supremacy to the technically junior, was one of the major forms of twin-court partnership. As we have seen, oral history made it paradigmatic. In addition, Tlala, Tawana's son, had just been killed by the Matebele, and Moroka married his widow and inherited her household. Calling Tlala his "elder brother," Moroka welcomed his son Tshipinare (often spelled Sepinaar), a teenager, as his own son.

After the debacle of Difaqane in the 1820s, described at the end of [Chapter 1](#), Moroka also restored the Wesleyan missionaries to a position of prestige and prepared to lead a trek far to the south, away from both predators, Mzilikazi and Moletsane. He dispatched a small party of counselors and Christians to reconnoiter a site on the river called "Willow Tree" (*Mohokare*) or, punningly, "Middle" (*Mokohare*).⁶ This scenic valley, subsequently renamed the Caledon River Valley, was already well known to South Africans. Invaders from east of the Drakensberg had occupied the "Middle" River's best sites, and MmaNtathisi's successor Sekonyela claimed much of it. Recently its population had thickened with loyalists to Moshoeshoe.

The river flows in a southwesterly direction, draining three mountain ranges into the Orange River. Over the eons, its waters laid down a span of fertile soil on both its sides, in a wide valley, allowing for both maize and wheat to be grown with success. The people building houses and working the land there recognized Moshoeshoe as their chief, even as they plowed and reaped for personal profit. Moshoeshoe welcomed Moroka's thousands of settlers as subjects similarly acknowledging his authority.⁷ While Moroka would

Education, 2001), 240; John Campbell, *Travels in South Africa. Undertaken at the Request of the Missionary Society* (London: Flagg and Gould, 1816), 1, 173.

⁵ William F. Lye, "The Ndebele Kingdom South of the Limpopo River," *Journal of African History*, 10, 1 (1969), 87–104. Tawana was apparently in Khunwana for a battle in 1832, coming south afterward.

⁶ S. M. Molema, *Chief Moroka: His Life, His Times and His People* (Cape Town: Methodist Publishing House, 1951), 35.

⁷ *Basuto* persisted in most places until the firm arrival of *BaSotho* and *Lesotho* in sanctioned official discourse in the twentieth century. Molema, *Chief Moroka*, 37, and 30 ff.; George

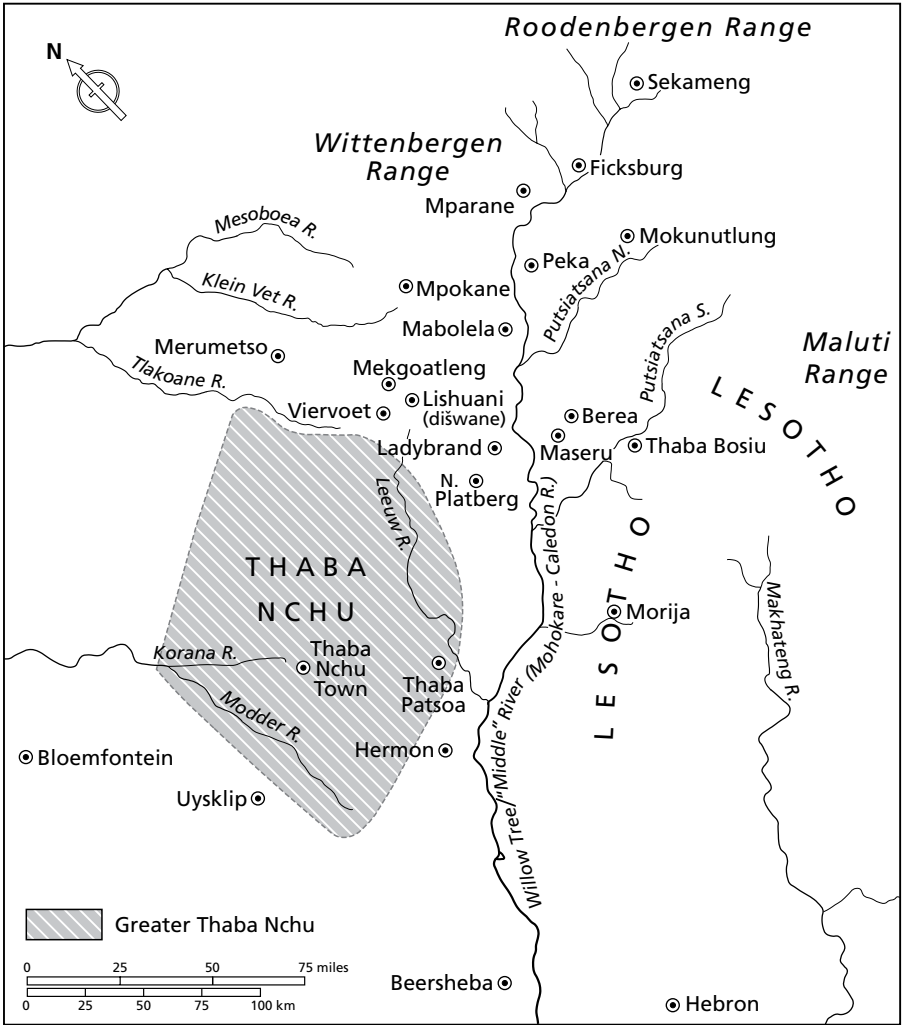


FIGURE 4.1. Map of the “Middle” River (Mohokare, or Caledon) Valley, so-called in the era of its emergence as Moshoeshoe’s agrarian heartland. After a map drawn by the author, using maps in Sanders, *Moshoeshoe*, and Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto*.

M. Theal, *Basutoland Records*, 3 vols. (Cape Town: W. A. Richards, 1883; reprint, Cape Town: Struik, 1964), Vol. IIIA, 97–8; Colin Murray, *Black Mountain: Land, Class and Power in the Eastern Orange Free State, 1880s–1980s* (Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand Press, 1992), 15; Hope Yonke Phillips, “The Bagaseleka Barolong’s Search for a Homeland,” B.A. Thesis, University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, 1976, 3–10; Etherington, *The Great Treks*, 203–5, and William Lye and Colin Murray, *Transformations on the Highveld: The Tswana and Southern Sotho* (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble Books, 1980), 52–3.

later claim that he intended to remain independent, his choices at the time did not include this option. Moroka sent Moshoeshoe some cattle and prepared to move to Thaba Nchu.

Moroka's trek there from the Vaal–Harts confluence, together with subordinates and allied chiefs and Kho-speaking horsemen, required many weeks of hardship. It is shown in [Figure 4.2](#) in the next page.

Unusually, Moroka's people came to their new land as outright "owners" in the emerging jigsaw puzzle of colonial claims. Or rather, the Wesleyans kept a title deed on behalf of Moroka's "tribe." The local Methodist church and its missionaries gathered chiefs' signatures, including Moshoeshoe's and Sekonyela's (but not Moroka's), over a year-long period, assembling two documents that gave them the "title" for vast tracts of land. The Methodist mission's prose beacons off one of their holdings as a trapezoid of territory known as Thaba Nchu or "black mountain," named after the town close to a hill of that name (*thaba 'ntsho*). The small chief who was already living at Thaba Nchu, a crocodile-ranked man named Moseme, had been attacked by Boers, who stole his people into slavery; therefore he welcomed Moroka's eight thousand or so trekkers – especially the chief's métis people, with their expertise in guns.⁸

A few years after the settlement, a new Methodist missionary, James Cameron, arriving from old Platberg, came upon Thaba Nchu and evoked its layout on first inspection:

The main body of these huts occupies two eminences forming two separate communities, under the government of two distinct and independent Chiefs, Morocco [Moroka] and Tonani [Tawana], the mission premises standing between them.⁹

A familiar pattern took hold, that of the ranked twin-court partnership, and provided the basis for more complex relations of power in Thaba Nchu thereafter. Some thought Tawana's Tshidi-people court should have had de facto seniority, and that Moroka's adoption of Tshipinare, the Tshidi heir's son, was a canny, strategic move. Moroka probably delayed convoking a circumcision cohort for highveld youths in Platberg before the journey south to Thaba Nchu because of uncertainty over his status. To make his paramouncy inevitable, he wanted it to be crystal clear to his people that his prescient deal through the Wesleyans had brought security.

The combined people-of-rolong population ultimately assembling in Thaba Nchu amounted to well over ten thousand strong. While this was but a third of the number of followers of Moshoeshoe, so long as Moroka had

⁸ Janet Wales, "The Relationship between the Orange Free State and the Rolong of Thaba 'Nchu during the Presidency of J. H. Brand, 1864–1888," M.A. Thesis, Rhodes University, 1979, published as part 2 of *Archives Year Book for South African History* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1985), 169.

⁹ WMMS, S.A.-corr, James Cameron, *Plaat Berg 27/8/1840*, cited in Schoeman, ed., *The Wesleyan Mission in the O.F.S.*, 78–9; and Cory, PR 3548, James Cameron, "Journal Containing an Account of Incidents and Occurrences from 1836 to 1841 in Kaffirland, Albany and Bachuanaland [*sic*]," 1841, microformed at the Cory Library.

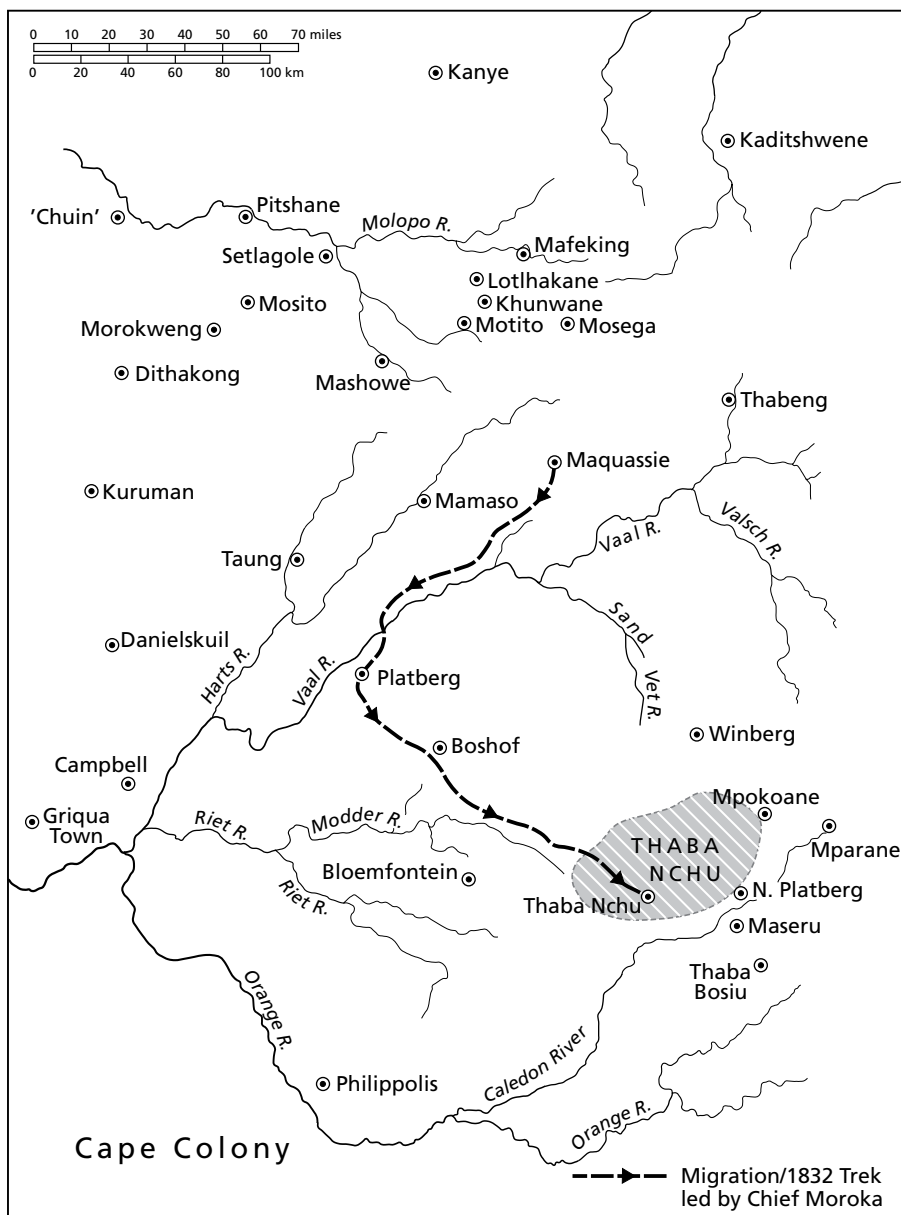


FIGURE 4.2. Moroka's people's trek to Thaba Nchu, 1832–1833. After a map drawn by the author, using maps in Etherington, *The Great Treks*, and Molema, *Chief Moroka*.

Tawana and other allied *rolong*-order chiefs behind him, his future looked bright. When most of his people had arrived at Thaba Nchu, Moroka called a mass meeting to confirm his status among them. Around the court sat his allies: from Chuin (*tšwaing*), the salt pans where Moffat learned his language, came chiefs Gontse and Bogachu with their men; there were other people-of-*rolong* chiefs; and there were crocodile-ranked factions, and a contingent of *ba-rotse* household heads, associated with Pifo and with Moroka's first wife, Moilana.¹⁰ There may well have been a few Europeans, and there were dozens of Khoe-speaking, trouser-wearing men, some with Dutch surnames. After a short debate, the meeting (*pitso*) acclaimed Moroka as chief.

Moroka then rose to speak. In his maiden chiefly address, he corruscated "the Korana," assailing them as criminals and scoundrels. Some of his listeners had identified themselves with this name not long before, as everyone understood. But Moroka was not denouncing the Korana joiners, only the life of raiding and insecurity they were leaving behind.¹¹ "You are no longer banditti here," Moroka was saying. "You are citizens in a proper chieftom."

MÉTIS, CHRISTIAN, CHIEF: INTERPENETRATIONS AND FORMATIONS OF POWER IN THE 1830S

The Griqua (re)possession of Christianity continued apace in the 1830s, métis preachers maintaining their stature even under siege.¹² Griqua life went on much as it did with other highveld people, as they rotated their crops, followed their cattle, and relied on extended families to raise their children. Like other highvelders, their cattle-holding men spoke at their council meetings, and they had semi-hereditary chiefs. They did as highveld chiefs usually did in welcoming foreigners as settlers under them. They developed a nonracialized Christian elite, which mixed Sechuana-, Khoe-, and Dutch-speakers together. Indeed their church regained its power after Moffat's sallies against them had passed, and it flourished.¹³ By 1840, 80 percent of the Christians under chief Andries Waterboer's "Griqua church" evangelists were "Bechuana," and the

¹⁰ Gontse (the people-of-*Ratlou* and *-rolong* chief) was in 1880 associated with "the Basuto," from Brand's "Arbitration," 1880, cited at the end of this chapter.

¹¹ WMMS, S.A. corr., Thomas Hodgson, 7/6/1830, MMS 303 fiche 72; and Archbell 19/7/1832, MMS 303, fiche 82. Also drawing on a letter published and edited by Schoeman, William Shaw, Grahamstown, 19/2/1840, in Schoeman, *The Wesleyan Mission in the Orange Free State*, esp. 69–71.

¹² Martin Legassick, "The Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana, and the Missionaries, 1789 to 1840: The Politics of a Frontier Zone," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California-Los Angeles, History, 1969, 219.

¹³ Richard Elphick, *Khoikhoi and the Founding of South Africa* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1980); Alan Barnard, *Hunters and Herders of Southern Africa: A Comparative Ethnography of the Khoisan Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and Elizabeth Elbourne, *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions, and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799–1853* (Montreal: Queens University, 2002), 325 ff. on "Hottentot nationalism."

Congregationalist membership organized a pedagogical corps larger than Moffat's at Kuruman.¹⁴ Griqua literates moved east and north to do the work of God, extending their tentative suzerainty north of the Vaal.

The Griqua closely bracketed their chiefdom with their church. Nonetheless Chief Andries Waterboer – in the year 1827 – demonstrated his chiefly right to kill human beings in his own court, hanging three prisoners under orders, risking this connection early on (and provoking an invasion). His ascent in the church was blocked for a while, but not for long, and ultimately he came to occupy the most influential position in it. He and the Griqua church leaders foreswore “uncivilized” behavior and refused to hunt (at a time of decreasing game), slaughtering only their own, domesticated, herd animals.¹⁵ They took charge of funerals: they forbade grieving, and in prayer-meetings they discussed, or decided, whether the soul of the departed had gone to heaven or hell. Life, death, and the hereafter, were all to be determined by this same group of senior men, advisers to Chief Waterboer.

Moffat continued to express his anxiety with this coalescence of power and told Griqua parishioners to their faces that they were misusing his translations, and that they risked damnation, using a word glossed as “devilish.” (Recall that the way to indicate “the devil,” for both Broadbent and Moffat, was “ancestors” or “*badeem*.”) Griquatown Christians, in turn, charged that Moffat preached a “doctrine of hell,” excluding people from fellowship, and so offending against Christ's message, which was unconditional acceptance. Anyone who could speak the words, and professed to accept what they meant, was a Christian, just as anyone could join Moshoeshoe or Sekhukhune by accepting their norms. Moffat deprecated the quality of Griqua pastors, challenging their right to offer communion. There had to be tests, he insisted, thresholds along the path to grace, which Griqua pastors lacked the competence to monitor. The Griquatown deacons then accused Moffat of fathering an illegitimate child with a métis woman in his tiny congregation – a grave sin for him, an occasion for confession and embrace for them. It was reported that Christians in the southern highveld, seeing the discord between Moffat at Kuruman and Griquatown's Griqua church, asked, “Are there two Gods/ancestors?”¹⁶

Thaba Nchu's church kept afield from these conflicts; its members were a compact, self-integrated group, made of members of chiefly and junior houses and some métis families. At first it was a limited, married men's affair. The

¹⁴ Based on Cape Town, South African Library (SAL), W. G. Mears, “The Wesleyan Baralong Mission in Trans-Orangia, 1821–1884,” ms., 15–17; see also Mears, “The Bechuana Mission or the Advance of Christianity into the Transvaal and the Orange Freestate,” *Methodist Missionary*, 4 (1960), 26–61; Mears conducted research for the Native Affairs Department in 1940: South African National Archives (SAB), NTS 307, 1/54, W. G. Mears.

¹⁵ In the legitimizing logic of Hebrew dietary laws: Legassick, “The Griqua,” 541; my analysis (not Legassick's) drawing on Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: an Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Praeger, 1966), 19 ff.

¹⁶ (“*A medimo embedi ...*”) Legassick, “The Griqua,” 541.

bulk of the people had only occasional and spectatorial engagements with Christianity (*sekeresete*), in court-prayers called by the chief or sermons delivered on holidays or other state functions. At the same time, the small church, or some of its representatives, traveled with the chief and would announce his arrival at a village like medieval heralds, shouting hymns and prayers before him.¹⁷ There were rarely more than a dozen catechumens preparing for membership and perhaps a hundred Christians, all told less than 1 percent of the population.¹⁸

The Reverend James Archbell's dispatches from Thaba Nchu reveal his and other missionaries' resulting frustration.¹⁹ Complaining about the sluggish progress, he termed "the absence of all religion or worship and hence the absence of all theological terms" among the people a serious impediment, as had Moffat and others before him. And like Moffat, he found himself blamed for an ongoing drought. Archbell therefore put himself at Moroka's disposal and offered to make rain. Missionaries often targeted rain-making as their competition, as they saw it as especially "atheistical," enjoining rites by which "the witness that God has given of his power and goodness is denied."²⁰ Archbell challenged the rain-makers of Platberg and was able to record an instance when prayers seemed to work, when "The heavens gathered ... [and] rain commenced." He observed of the specialists, blamed for their powerlessness, that they were "ashamed and confounded." Many of them also, Archbell wrote, began to "pray to God."²¹

The act of describing the "rain-makers" as praying was itself significant. For their intoned words already had meaning, from other, prior and ongoing usages, which missionaries well knew. Archbell explicitly complained that "the Bechuana" were "too inclined to attach to words thus used [in prayers] former ideas only." For example, "the *holiness* of God appears to them as something resembling a washed garment, or a prospect pleasing to the sense of sight." Clean and pretty were supposed to give content to "holiness," their usages having been fixed before the advent of a "spiritual" domain.²² But there was no easy shift to the imaginary.

Even in the smallest church, determining what catechumens said – whether it was about God or salvation, or something else – was ever only a partial

¹⁷ David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), on the intersections of "royalty"; and Cory, WMMS, S.A. in corr., Cameron to Gen. Secy., Grahamstown, 28/5/1849.

¹⁸ James Backhouse, *Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa* (1839) (London: Hamilton, Adams, 1844), 413, gives 100 members including catechumens.

¹⁹ Hodgson was replaced by a man (Snowdale) who died within the year, and by John Edwards, who joined Archbell as his junior.

²⁰ Cory, Grahamstown, MS 1116, Journal of Francis Owen, June 1840, "23/41".

²¹ WMMS, S.A. corr., Archbell 20/3/1832, first cited by Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, "Colonization of Consciousness," *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Boulder: Westview, 1992), 242, 18n, 262.

²² *Ibid.*, and 1830 (inadequately sourced by SAL, W. G. Mears, in "Wesleyan Baralong Mission," pp. 15–17).

and halting project. Ultimately, repeat performances of particular usages midwived religion as a separate field of activity: in the end Christians on the highveld sorted out cleanliness and godliness well enough. A world of after-death participation loomed as a corollary to prayer and recital, a universe of reward and satisfaction. Because such ideas circulated ahead of the missionaries and their catechisms, however, discussing or even espousing them did not indicate converting to Christianity. At the very start of his tenure with Moroka, Archbell witnessed the last words of a “young man who ... died without the Lord,” hailing a deceased brother thus: “I shall soon be with him.” One man told Arbousset and Daumas that he had heard the good news, of “a rich and benevolent chief who can increase our flocks,” and that he wanted to settle near him and “get cattle.”²³ When missionaries encountered these ideas, they looked for opportunities to spiritualize them and refine their meaning. “I see the gates of heaven open!” cried out Katrina in a mission-approved text describing a deathbed scene in Thaba Nchu: “And the glory of the lamb! Farewell!”²⁴ Many people accepted the idea that there was a superior power or ultimate progenitor in whose service the missionaries labored, but no more than that. Commenting that people were “changing their way of thinking on the subject” of God/Ancessor, Andrew Smith noted in 1840 that “they often swear by their father and by themselves.”²⁵ How much of a transformation was that?

In and among the Griqua, or other métis, or among chiefdoms of “Bechuana” on the highveld, staking out Christianity’s imaginary kingdom was the first priority, but missionaries had to work on the shifting sands of genuine mobilizations. In 1834, from among the people of chief Lepui (place-of-fish) living in and around Griquatown, there suddenly came unfettered professions of faith. Around the same time, women under Moshoeshoe said they were possessed by “spirits” who demanded the destruction of everything connected with establishment Christianity or white people – even grandfather’s old clay pipe. Among Wesleyans, Archbell praised “our Buchaap people,” Barend Barends’ multiethnic roving chiefdom of the 1830s, for having been up all night “praying.” In the morning they left “for their own villages, adoring and praising God.”²⁶ Because a godly people needed a common location (they had only “villages,” plural), they gained the assistance of Archbell’s junior colleague, the Reverend John Edwards, in collecting at “Lishuani” (*dis[h]wane*: see

²³ WMMS, S.A. corr., Archbell, February (?) 1830, MMS 303, fiche 73; Thomas Arbousset and Francois Daumas, *Narrative of an Exploratory Tour to the Northeast of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope ... In the Months of March, April and May, 1836*, trans. John Brown (Cape Town: Struik, 1968 [originally published by A. S. Robertson, 1846]), interlocutor in “Sotho” village, 169.

²⁴ Cory, WMMS MS 15621, Circuit Report of Thaba Nchu from 1878, 44–5; and WITS, Cullen Library, Church of the Province of South Africa (Anglican) (CPSA), AB 2259/Gd1.2 William Crisp, Log Book, Vol. 2, 1873, Phokoane, August 1876, 4.

²⁵ SAL, Smith, Vol. 12, memoranda A, 15, “batlhaping” (also “what is by Moshush.”)

²⁶ WMMS, S.A. corr., Archbell 20/3/1832, MMS 303, fiche 80.

map, Fig. 4.1), a place the Methodists “purchased” along with Thaba Nchu. Unfortunately, they soon evacuated Lishuani, and Moshoeshoe’s sons crossed the “Middle” River and occupied the church Edwards had built. By then Edwards had left and was staying to the west in Merumetsho, with Sekonyela’s people.²⁷ Under Edward’s guidance, a “revival” broke out in Merumetsho, and a German traveler saw a reenactment of “the day of the Pentecost” in the extremity of people’s fervor – the wives and children of MmaNtathisi’s warriors, shouting out and speaking in tongues! A few years later they went to build villages near Wesleyan mission stations, leaving Merumetsho to the people of Jan Taaibosch (or Kaptein), the métis leader.²⁸

Missionaries’ success in this rolling borderlands of overlapping affiliations was to register appropriate phenomena as religious and to try to take charge of what they named.

BOERS

Into this same terrain came an eruption of those other Cape trekkers, the Dutch-origin Boers, beginning in 1836. Descended from the Dutch East India Company’s employees and other European colonists, the Boers were backed by no formal state authority; notwithstanding, they founded their own hegemonies, grasping religion, race, and ethnic difference as basic differentiations, and bringing new relations of production to the land. For decades individual Dutch-speaking transfrontiersmen, hunters, and the odd family had crossed the Orange River, but in a short nine-year period (1836–45), a “Great Trek” ensued, involving hundreds of wagons of colonists even in the first years, their numbers soon surpassing Moroka’s entire chiefdom.²⁹

First, in 1836, relatively unnoticed by historians, 500 or 600 métis arrived from the Eastern Cape, flush with sheep and goats. Calling themselves “Newlanders” and “Binnelanders” they settled the Wesleyan station “New Platberg” to the east of Thaba Nchu. Subsequently, in the same year, Mzilikazi announced that all visitors to his kingdom with friendly intentions, had to come along the “Kuruman road,” via Robert Moffat’s theocratic settlement, or risk being attacked. Under Andries Hendrick Potgieter, about 1,600 Boer wagons of armed men and their families trekked from the Cape; Potgieter ignored, or never heard, Mzilikazi’s directive and approached

²⁷ Peter David was living at Lishuani in 1837, a station in the Basuto/PEMS ambit: W. C. Harris, *Narrative of an Expedition into South Africa* (Bombay: Mission Press, 1838), 138, 90, 270.

²⁸ Pentecost: John Edwards, *Reminiscences of the Early Life and Missionary Labours of the Rev. John Edwards, Fifty Years a Wesleyan Missionary in South Africa* (London: T. Woolmer, 1886), 102; also cited in Mears, “Baralong Mission,” 21; Leonard Thompson, *Survival in Two Worlds: Moshoeshoe of Lesotho, 1786–1870* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 112; S. J. Gill, *A Short History of Lesotho* (Moriija: MMA, 1993), 113, 123, 125, citing Andrew Smith in 1839.

²⁹ Hermann Giliomee, *The Afrikaners* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 2003), 150.

the Transvaal without informing the heavenly (*zulu*) chief. His people-of-Tebele army attacked the Boers near Thaba Nchu and destroyed their party. Moroka and the Christians in Thaba Nchu found them after their ordeal, and gave succor to the survivors.³⁰

Decades later, Solomon Plaatje, a founding father of the African National Congress, wrote about the relationship between these Boers and highveld farmers in almost mythological terms. In what is generally seen as the first novel written by a black South African, Plaatje's *Mhudi*, the characters "de Villiers" and "Ra-Thaga," personifying the two communities, become unlikely friends. Together, they channel their energies toward defeating Mzilikazi's Matebele.³¹ In 1837, a genuine alliance between Potgieter and Moroka did form. Joining him were Gerrit Maritz, Peter David (Barend Barends' eventual successor), and the Linkses, who had known Archbell twenty years before, and Jan "Kaptein" – whose very authority, John Edwards felt, was increasingly based in the Christian mission. They rode in support of Moroka's sons, who coordinated the infantry, and surprised and defeated Mzilikazi's warriors at the battle of "Vegkop."

The rout helped propel Mzilikazi over the Limpopo River in 1838 or 1839.³² In the wake of his departure, the old crocodile, *rolong* and *ba rotse* lands north of the Vaal, a vast territory, reopened for settling. Both Boers and highveld people looked to it.³³

CHRISTIANITY AND ETHNICITY, PART I

Who would replace the people-of-Tebele north of the Vaal River? Or rather, what *sort* of power might take root there? This is not a question ordinarily understood as central to the spread of Christianity in South Africa, but it ought to be so considered. The Boers were interested in settling and prospering in the Transvaal, and they depended heavily on others' labor. Mattyees Fourie with his mountain métis ("Bergenaars") had cleared the area between

³⁰ Andre du Toit and Hermann Giliomee, eds., *Afrikaner Political Thought, Vol. I* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1982), 282; 6.9a, "Resolutions adopted at the Meeting of the Trekker Leaders," Thaba Nchu, December 2, 1836; and 6.9b, "Resolutions ... under Piet Retief," Vet River, June 6, 1837; Etherington, *The Great Treks*, 252–4.

³¹ Solomon Plaatje, *Mhudi* (New York: Penguin, 2005; 1st. ed., Lovedale, 1930), and see Tim Cousens, "Sol. T. Plaatje and the First South African Epic," *English in Africa*, 14, 1 (1987), 41–66, and Peter Limb, "Solomon Plaatje Reconsidered," *African Studies* 62, 1 (2003), 33–52, reading *Mhudi* vis-à-vis the 1913 Land Act.

³² R. Kent Rasmussen, *Migrant Kingdom: Mzilikazi's Ndebele in South Africa* (London: Rex Collings, 1978), 107, 123–8; Molema, *Chief Moroka*, 19, 10–36; George M. Theal, *History of South Africa*, 6 vols., Vol. 2, 1828–46 (Cape Town: S. Sonnenschein, 1908), 286–91. Kaptein/Jan Taaibosch/Hanto: John Edwards, *Reminiscences of the Early Life and Missionary Labours of the Rev. John Edwards, Fifty Years a Wesleyan Missionary in South Africa* (London: T. Woolmer, 1886), on the "Namaqua" Christians, 110–11, and Schoeman, *Wesleyan Mission*.

³³ Etherington, *The Great Treks*, 256; Lye, "The Ndebele," 88, dates the attack to 17 January and a second brutal one to November.

the Vaal and Harts, “exterminat[ing]” the Bushmen and Korana, and so claimed the land was his. Métis leader Peter David, whose people had been badly maimed by the Matebele before, had been exploring the area around present-day Johannesburg for possible settlement before he joined in the 1837 war on Mzilikazi. And Andries Waterboer, chief of the Griqua, nurtured by the London Missionary Society (LMS), was said to wish to relocate his chiefdom to the same area. Then of course there was Moshoeshoe. These men were by no means friendly to the massification of the Boers. Peter Links told John Edwards’s family that he had dreamt of the devil. “What did he look like, Peter?” asked Mrs. Edwards. “Net als een Boor,” Peter replied.³⁴

Closer to home, Moffat’s realm at Kuruman benefited from the campaign against Mzilikazi; the mission swelled with refugees, métis and others from distressed chiefdoms. Other leaders receiving refugees also asserted their prerogatives in Christian domains. Adam Kok III tried to force Moshoeshoe’s French Protestant missionaries off the eastern banks of the Caledon River. If he were compelled to have a missionary, he said, it could only be the West Indian (black) pastor, the Reverend William Corner. Barend Barends asked for the discharged James Read of the LMS, or no one.³⁵ And Waterboer, belying his origins as a lay preacher, not only refused to host missionaries but also vowed to “sweep” them from Kuruman and the rest of the Transvaal.

Indeed Waterboer, eschewing establishment Christianity directly, said he possessed “*bongaka*,” – the ancient Bantu-derived term signified ancestor-oriented naturalistic expertise. He made connections abroad, with a *ha rotse* chiefly heir, Moilwa, and with the fast expanding people-of-Ngwaketse dominion.³⁶ Waterboer signed a treaty with Chief Kok at Philippolis, the Griqua town midwived by John Philip, the LMS resident executive. “The country belonging to the two Chiefs and their people shall be called Griqualand and shall be governed by the presently known Chiefs,” Waterboer and Kok declared in their treaty, neglecting to place any limits on said country.³⁷

The Reverend Francis Owen of the Church Missionary Society in the Anglican communion, fresh from witnessing Chief Dingane’s massacre of Piet Retief’s Boer and métis trekkers in the Zulu capital, went to investigate the possibility of a unified prestige-place (people-of-*ha-rotse*) mission, traveling up the Harts River. Owen saw Chief Waterboer’s influence in the Motito (*bothitong*) region at firsthand. Among many different kinds of people there, including “two bushmen in skins [and] ... a native who speaks the Coranna language,” were several prominent “Griqua.” These included “a teacher who preaches to them in their language, sent to them by Waterboer,” supervising

³⁴ SAL, W. G. Mears papers, Mears, “Methodist Missionaries,” ms.; “Archbell,” and see Chapter 3.

³⁵ Etherington, *The Great Treks*, 190, 300–1.

³⁶ Cory, MS 1116, Journal of Francis Owen, June 23, 1839.

³⁷ For Philip, see Robert Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750–1870: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), esp. 110–128, viz., “Basterland” was used in Dutch. Schoeman, *The Mission at Griquatown*, 163, 169.

a “day school for children.” No white pastors were needed. Near Motito, Nicolas Kruger, another Griqua, told a missionary and his wife at their wagon that his people had been poorly served by missionaries such as they, in contrast to the experience of the “American nation.” Only now were South Africans “able to teach the inhabitants of the whole country including the Bechuana tribes.”³⁸ On being informed that the Harts River region was not Griqua country, Kruger demurred. “It is my country. My mother was a Mochuana.”³⁹

When the Reverend Owen traveled to Mosega, his mission intersected with Potgieter and the Transvaal Boers’ delineations of highvelders’ land. Owen was trying to fulfill Moffat’s old promise to Pifo, to found a mission on the basis of *ha-rotse* restoration, at the time the Griqua pastors were seeding small Bechuana-peopled “congregations” in the same part of the country. The question of “tribe” rose to the level of articulation in the context of considering who might be included or not in a reunion or restoration of chiefs and the land.⁴⁰ Potgieter declared that “Baharutse” would only be permitted to (re) occupy Mosega and its environs as a tribe; after all, as he wrote to the Colony in justifying his own trek, “we regard ourselves as free citizens who might go where we please without acting to the detriment of any other, as all nations are free and go where they like.” Highveld people were imagined in the same mode, as self-contained, mobile peoples (“*naties*”); and so Potgieter stipulated that only “they, the Baharutse,” could collect at Mosega, and “forbade any other people to go,” blocking add-ons, allies, subordinate lords, and so on. Finally the “Baharutse tribe” could no longer expand, any eastward movement being specifically debarred.⁴¹

This was how Europeans made tribes. As Owen observed, however, the people were not so easily fashioned into a unity. They already “had formed connexion with various chiefs round about them” where they lived, notably to the chiefs Mahura and Mashowe; they could not move without their “advice or consent.”⁴² The alternative to tribalizing was seen by sovereign highveld

³⁸ No. XXIV, extract (p. 19) from “Bloemhof Arbitration Blue Book,” hearing of 13/4/1871, in Francis H. S. Orphan and David Arnot, *The Land Question in Griqualand West, An Inquiry* (London: S. Solomon, 1875), 191; Legassick, “The Griqua,” 550–7; quote, 557, citing John Edwards, “Notes of Events at Daniels Kuil,” March 10, 1838, enclosure in LMS, S.A. corr., Kuruman missionaries, September 10, 1838, 16/2/E. The Kruger encounter was in March 1838.

³⁹ Legassick, “The Griqua,” 558.

⁴⁰ Etherington, *The Great Treks*, 252–4; Moffat in Isaac Schapera, ed., *Apprenticeship at Kuruman: Being the Journals and Letters of Robert and Mary Moffat, 1820–1828* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1951), 282.

⁴¹ Cory, MS 1116, Journal of Francis Owen, March 23, 1839; Robert C. Germond, ed., *Chronicles of Basutoland: A Running Commentary on the Events of the Years 1830–1902, by the French Protestant Missionaries in South Africa* (Moriija: Moriija Book Depot, 1967) 101; Andrew Manson, “The Hurutshe and the Foundation of the Transvaal State,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 25, 1 (1992), 85–98, for Moilwa’s problems with the Boers as allies.

⁴² Cory, MS 1116, Journal of Francis Owen, March 23, 1839. John Campbell, *Travels in South Africa. Undertaken at the Request of the Missionary Society* (London: Flagg and Gould, 1816), 8, 84, calls Mashowe’s chief, “Chief” (“Kosi”).

people as living on the land in a complex network of open chief- and ancestor-based formations, involving inflected and unequal alliances. The tribe was formed when people's rights to live in these ways were abrogated.

COLOUREDS

As we have seen there was not at first any clear division between "Coloured" and "Native" people in many contexts.

In 1838 Robert Moffat, having become a respected sage, signaled anew that the London Missionary Society might yet withdraw the designation "Christian" from Griqua fellowship. While Moffat was constrained by John Philip's ongoing patronage of Griqua society at Philippolis under the Kok family, indirectly he worked against them. He and Henry Calderwood, his contemporary in the Eastern Cape, demanded a "stricter set of standards" for membership in LMS parish churches. This was the way Moffat had disem-boweled métis churches before. Racial identity would be essential and given. Faith would be adjudged from without.

At this moment, contradictorily, the Reverend Archbell was dismissed from missionary work for advancing the idea of Colouredness. It was said he disregarded the fine distinctions between "Bastard," Griqua, "Christian," Binnelander, "New Zealander," and so on. Too quickly, he subverted arrangements of status in several hamlets, especially in New Platberg – "making a government" there in a way bruising to Christians – such that he had to be reassigned.⁴³ The "Great Trek" of Boers and métis had begun, and the Grahamstown Methodist Church, effectively Archbell's parent body, was embroiled in its own debate about Colouredness, European-ness, and Christian fellowship.

For a long time Grahamstown Christianity was unencumbered by segregation, featuring Dutch and English Methodist sermons, attended by anyone. Visiting pastors preached to multihued crowds. Then, at the much-delayed arrival of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in Thaba Nchu, almost all the Dutch-speakers left Methodism for the DRC, except those stopped from joining them on racial grounds.⁴⁴ When the Methodist pastor raised money to

⁴³ Schoeman, *The Wesleyan Mission*, 41, quoting WMMS, S.A. corr., Archbell to WMMS, January 1, 1839; Karel Schoeman (not I) also consulted the Wesleyan parish "minute book" from 1839; cf. Archbell's intervention claiming Daniel's Kuil (Danielskuil) on 11/2/1832, J. S. Galbraith, *Reluctant Empire: British Policy on the South African Frontier, 1838–1854* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 150–1, referencing BPP, 1836 (538), Vol. VII, and 1837 (425), Vol. VII, Reports, *Select Committee on Aborigines (British settlements)*, Vol. 1; see Elizabeth Elbourne, "The Sin of the Settler: The 1835–36 Select Committee on Aborigines and Debates over Virtue and Conquest in the Early Nineteenth-Century British White Settler Empire," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 4, 3 (Winter 2003; e-journal).

⁴⁴ Giliomee claims that the DRC did not discriminate on the grounds of race at the time of the 1853 OFS constitution, when it "absorbed" all existing "parishes." Lindley (see next paragraph) was the same American missionary who left Mzilikazi in the 1837 fracas. Giliomee,

build a church building to be reserved for white (and English-speaking) people, the congregants petitioned to have him removed in favor of a more tolerant pastor, a Boer named Smit, who with the American missionary Daniel Lindley had been administering the sacraments for some years. Those sacraments were retrospectively voided by the DRC.

It was the left-back Christians, the petitioning body, the Dutch-speakers in Methodism, who by their positive actions within the framework allotted to them, produced themselves as “Coloured”.⁴⁵ In the immediate wake of the Reverend Archbell’s forced departure, the white Grahamstown church requested the sending of a missionary specifically for “the Coloureds” up in the “Middle” (Caledon) Valley and the southern highveld, the area of Archbell’s prior supervision.⁴⁶ In short, the Coloured category was created as an adjunct and alternative to whiteness in Cape Town and Grahamstown, then projected into a different situation involving Bantu-speaking people. The transplantation produced an uneven and situational set of responses.

Moffat and Calderwood continued to work against Waterboer and the multi-ethnic Griqua church leadership (*and* against the Grahamstown “Coloured” elite). They wished to preserve European-based missionary societies’ control over these forces. As before, establishment Christianity stood against the extension of the highveld’s political tradition through Christianity; against, in other words, Christianity’s congruence with autonomous power. Now, with the rise of racialism, the missionaries had a new tool they could use to erase this congruence. Tribalism and noncitizenship were to be extended to all brown people. Moffat and Calderwood simultaneously developed the institutional apparatus of representative “Bechuana District Committees,” routinizing Christian gatekeeping in mission affairs in the name of “the Bechuana” as a single tribe (distinct from Coloureds). The missionaries on the Committees would be able to police the standards for being a Christian by outvoting the few nonwhite pastors able to travel and attend, and so they could prevent any other social formation from following the Griqua model.

Real “Christians” as recognized by Europeans were “Bechuana” capable of holding to a personal commitment to foreign standards, even – or especially – over their regard for their fellows. Indeed, they were to renounce one another as adulterers and polygamists, and accept the ejection of their closest kin and friends from their sacralized gatherings. Moffat and Calderwood insisted that for people to be considered “saved,” further, they should have to internalize the Gospel truths translated and published by Moffat – which, granted,

The Afrikaners, 176, 184; and Peter Delius and Stanley Trapido, “Inboekselings and Oorlams: The Creation and Transformation of a Servile Class,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 8, 2 (1982), 214–42.

⁴⁵ Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 340 ff.; and Robert Ross, “Congregations, Missionaries and the Grahamstown Schism of 1842–3,” in John de Gruchy, ed., *The London Missionary Society in Southern Africa, 1799–1999* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000), 120–31.

⁴⁶ SAL, Mears, “Wesleyan Baralong Mission,” and Schoeman, n.44 above.

they were often very keen to do – but under white, European-dominated, establishment-Christianity oversight. Even powerful chiefs' people were so enjoined: read, then be saved, under European tutelage. Moffat's two reasons for spending time in London in 1840 were to condemn métis Christian control in South Africa to the LMS directors, and to print his new New Testament in greater quantities than he could manage on a hand press. These ends were complementary.

After that, paths began to open for establishment Christianity in the very places that able chiefs had looked to settle and resettle their people. Many highveld residents resisted it. As the power of the Koks began to diminish, Philip's alternative plans for the southern highveld also fell apart. No new chiefly recolonization of the Transvaal transformed the land, leaving highveld farmers to stand their ground against the Boers as well as they could. Meanwhile however Moffat produced the first New Testament printed in a sub-Saharan African language, and his complete Bible in 1857 was also the first such. It provided the lexical benchmark for all subsequent Bibles in S-group Bantu languages and indeed all Africa, as well as all subsequent mission-press literate expression in southern Africa. As texts go, the influence of Moffat's promulgated Word is difficult to overstate.

BAROLONG AND BASUTO AND ...

How did tribal identities emerge in South Africa – *did* they emerge? By tribes, to restate the point, one means affiliations that are taken as primary, inalienable birthrights, uniting culture and blood, and providing a total blueprint for behavior, necessarily diminished by “civilization.” Can we speak of a time-frame for the emergence, even if only partially, of such modes of association and self-description among highveld people – of a “tribal” encroachment onto previously political terrain? Surprisingly, this question has hardly been posed by historians of South Africa. We have already seen that Europeans *always* thought in terms of tribes, from the very start of their familiarity with the agrarian chiefdoms of South Africa. This is not the same thing as the people of South Africa doing so.⁴⁷ The highveld political tradition emphasized in-mixtures of people in several modes, as we have seen, and deemphasized origins (and skin color and accent), in the pursuit of a common, hierarchized, intermarried, growth-oriented settlement. Europeans understood the highveld's internal differences as being writ forever, in people's bloodlines, with in-migrations and in-marriages peripheral to their continuities over time.

Most convincing arguments about the creation of tribalism in South Africa focus on the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Many supposedly ancient affiliations in southern Africa have been shown to be

⁴⁷ A point also made in a critique of the very concept of “identity” by Fred Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (California: University of California Press, 2006), 71–2.

“invented traditions,” assembled in particular circumstances from disparate sources. In some cases, however, these were clearly political mobilizations of existing ethnic groups. At least on the highveld, Bahurutshe, Barolong, Batlaping, and Basuto (inter alia) emerged as ethnic affiliations well before the late nineteenth century. Although we cannot paint a full picture for the whole of South Africa, Basuto and Barolong emerged as major highveld ethnicities, and their early trajectories can be sketched. Both could be found in common usage by the middle of the 1840s as sufficient terms of differentiation without any requisite internal political meaning, in a wider field of interaction defined by others. Thereafter many tribes sheltered surviving elements of the highveld’s traditional strategies for mobilization; and further, within that wider field of interaction, many of them mobilized in order to contest state policies. If tribes first derived from a process of internal depoliticization and dispossession, as argued here, they also engaged in politics and remade themselves through that engagement.

The nineteenth century process of moving people’s associations onto ethnic terrain may be glimpsed, broadly, from the diminishing number of affiliations counted as “highveld tribes” by colonial authorities on the ground. The shift is from countenancing every affiliation as tribal, to delegitimizing all but administratable entities, and entering a manageable list into the imperial ledger.

The Reverend Thomas Hodgson intended his list of pre-“Difaqane” highveld “tribes” (1822–23) to be exhaustive. He listed thirty discrete entities observed from somewhere near Thabeng.⁴⁸ Even if obvious corrections and redactions were to be made, many remain unknown to the later nineteenth century:

1. Ligoya
2. Barolong (with whom I am.)
3. Baquain
4. Ba-Tau
5. Ba-koodu
6. Baklapeen
7. Ba-Koranna
8. Ba-gnuakets (or Wanketsens)
9. BaMmohudi

⁴⁸ Above, I am alluding to Terence Ranger’s and others’ essays in Vail, ed., *The Creation of Tribalism*. WMS, S.A. corr., T. L. Hodgson, Thabeng [April?] 1823, in SAL, MSC 39/13 Bks. 7 to 12, Thomas Hodgson notebook journals, “Sept. 1823”; other lists: Hinrich Lichtenstein, *Foundation of the Cape [and] About the Bechuanas*, ed. and trans. Otto Spohr (Cape Town: Balkema, 1973; originally published 1807), 64; LMS, S.A.-corr., 5/2/D, Campbell, Klaarwater, July 26, 1813, from Mothibe; John William Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa, 1822–24*, 2 vols. (London: Longman, Hurst, 1824; reprinted New York: Johnson Reprint, 1967), Vol. 2, 376–7, gives two kinds of Barolongs, Maruwonnas under Massao on the Molopo River, and Maibus under Makrakki (elsewhere, Macraca); Nuakketsies (like Wanketens, probably *ngwaketseng*) under Makhaba; Morutzies (“sometimes called Mahutzi”) i.e., *ha-rotse* further east; Bamakatta, and Makwiin (crocodile = *kwen*), and Karrikarri (*kgalagadi*).

10. BaMarotsi
11. Bo-Manyana
12. Bo-Nklatse
13. Ba-peere
14. Bo Maklotshe
15. Ba-katla
16. Ba-thakwa
17. Bo-silutaan
18. Ma-tibele
19. Litibele
20. Mantouaan
21. Masega
22. Maya
23. BaMatlatla
24. BaMakogana
25. Ba-koba
26. Bakarahade
27. BaMongwatu
28. Ba-Maquare
29. Ba-ramabode
30. Ba-Zua

The 1820s and 1830s toppled or reshuffled most of these networked communities or turned them into villages and ward-names in larger states. Certainly the era nearly ruined Sefunelo of the [*Ba-*]Seleka chiefdom (not listed above aside from “Barolong”), and chief Tawana, his [*Ba-*]Tshidi ally; and decimated Moletsane (who may be listed as “Ba-tau,” people of the lion, no. 4 above), his enemy. In contrast, Sir Andrew Smith’s 1839 list of highveld tribes, based on what highveld people told him, is much shorter:

- Batlapins or Macangobi
- Baclaru
- Barolong
- Baarootsie
- Bangwanketie
- Baquana
- Bamanguat
- Bakatla
- Bangpuru
- Matclame of Kalahari⁴⁹

Missing are those entities recognized as entirely new, Basuto still having no place; nor is there a “Griqua,” these people now meriting a racially separate

⁴⁹ SAM-L, Smith, “Memorandum A,” 1841. Elsewhere in these notes, Baarootzie becomes Bakharootsie, Barootzi, etc.

treatment. *Bapedi* (Ba-peere) has also unaccountably vanished. Overall this is a more manageable list.

Were they yet tribes? As Frederik Barth long ago argued, ethnicity has usually arisen at boundaries, as populations encounter one another and come to define their differences in useful ways.⁵⁰ In South Africa, ethnicity emerged at sheep-shearings, on big productive farms, in the diamond diggings, and in the Griqua dominions. The reference to tribal worlds was always to a situation somewhere else, a mass of people at a distance. The tribesman was initially a person away from his home ground, from his own chiefdom(s), encountering others.

Basuto and *Barolong* nonetheless followed distinct trajectories. Basuto emerged from Moshoeshoe's unprecedented success in heading a massive state, a safe haven for immigrants fleeing dispossession. The Basuto as a tribe long constituted a foreign policy goal for the British, not a reality. Barolong progressed into tribalism differently: from early on it was a fallback term, a logo of defeat. *Barolong* "tribalized" with the ruin of prestige-place-ranked chiefdoms, as they confronted the Boers' incursions, and as they shrank in the face of dispossession.

The best way to answer the question of how tribes emerged is not with a series of assertions but through an investigation of a coherent situation over time. For us, this will be the situation in Thaba Nchu, Moroka's town. Many of the lords and chiefs there, including the house of Tshidi, left to go back to places in the central highveld previously kept off limits because of Mzilikazi. Molema, Tlala's "brother" and a recognized Christian, left Thaba Nchu with many followers in 1841; the same year saw the departure of Matlabi and Gonntse, two major Seleka-house allies. The remaining wards also exhaled households from their oldest lineages. Some such junior household-heads left under the legacy of Setilo, a reputed bypassed heir; others followed other junior-house sons: Mekgwe, Ngakatau, Rantsa.⁵¹ Only a few relations of the Linkses and Taaibosches came from Namaqualand to fill their place.

Moroka's deteriorating situation therefore differed greatly from Moshoeshoe's bright Basuto success. Moshoeshoe continued to place male dependents in the valley as chiefs and to watch as new settlers from all over arrived in droves, thenceforth identifying them as "Basuto" (turned to *basotho* in the Reverend Eugene Casalis's idiosyncratic spellings). These people, "my people" according to the ruling house, embraced representatives of every part of the highveld and included even a few communities of Boers.⁵² New farms

⁵⁰ See Frederick Barth, "Introduction," *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Boston: Boston University Press, 1969), 9–38; but note also Patrick Harries, "Exclusion, Classification and Internal Colonialism," in Leroy Vail, ed., *Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 82–118.

⁵¹ Lye and Murray, *Transformations*, 67; Molema, *Chief Moroka*, 82, reports persons tried to form a people-of-Setilo state but failed.

⁵² Of the PEMS, the Protestant Paris Evangelical Missionary Society, sister society to the LMS. The trilled *r* and ultimately the simple *l* became used for more or less a "d" sound. Timothy

and subchiefs sprang up in allegiance to Moshoeshoe every year, as compared to Moroka, though even fewer people came to Moletsane, or Sekonyela, or Moseme. Barolong (sometimes Baralong) came to signify holdouts among the Natives: the “not Basuto,” as much as anything else. With his oddball land deed, filed in the Bloemfontein land records office, Moroka’s people were more than ever “Barolong.”

At the risk of belaboring the obvious, the notion that Moshoeshoe’s people were already a tribe is quite wrong. The Basuto mobilization in the 1830s had yet to be held to given territory. The record is confused because Moshoeshoe later sought to make use of the tribal idea in the midst of his success. Overlooking no opportunity to advance his interests, he claimed ancient connections (from his father’s people) to the “Middle” Valley, submitting this testimony to British arbitration and effectively backdating “the Basuto” as an ethnicity.⁵³ A similar opportunism can be discerned when Moroka complained of “Basuto” on his land, as if a tribal mistake was being made. “I have conveyed to Chief Moroka contents of your letter,” wrote Moroka’s missionary for the chief in 1849. “[H]e acknowledges having given that Basuto you mention notice to remove within the time specified viz. three days.”⁵⁴ In both cases the notion of preexisting identity is used in ongoing conflicts in a wider political field.

Acting a certain way makes things that way. The general affiliation “Barolong,” as a debating body, a membership in which “the four heads” (or houses) juggled their authority, gelled somewhat in the 1840s. Christians and missionaries in this decade helped transform sets of assertions and recitations about brotherhood and birth-order made over a wide area, some of which of course differed, into a mirror-image of a European royal house. Christian connections strengthened Barolong ties in another sense, too, for literacy and Christianity, however elite, were soon conceived of as quite “Barolong” by the un-Christian masses. Thus the Reverend Cameron nurtured the hope that “native Christians” held the key to further evangelization – of “the Barolong.” If that tribal name captured any quiddity, it was this: Bantu-speaking southern highveld familiarity with Christianity. Most of all the growth of Barolong as a tribal idea coincided with the regional loss of chiefly power, marked (for instance) by the magistrate who disrespected the chiefship and “ordered Moroka’s ‘Bushmen’ about, and cursed at the chief in his absence.”⁵⁵ With

Keegan, *Rural Transformations in Industrializing South Africa: The Southern Highveld to 1914* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 277; Giliomee, *Afrikaners*, 172.

⁵³ Norman Etherington, “A Tempest in a Teapot? Nineteenth Century Contests for Land in South Africa’s Caledon Valley and the Invention of the Mfecane,” *Journal of African History*, 45 (2004), 203.

⁵⁴ Cory, Letterbook of the Reverend James Cameron, Thaba Nchu, 19/1/1849, to William Shaw, also calling Southey, and Harry Smith, “dishonourable,” and using the plural (*basuto*) for the singular (*mosuto*).

⁵⁵ Shaw’s report to Secretary of State, 1840, in SAL, W. G. Mears, ms. “Wesleyan Baralong Mission,” 27–8.

each blow to the (or to any) chiefship's authority, the *rolong* rankings and other differentiations gave way to a generalized Barolong status. This might well have happened even faster, had Moroka not managed to hold on to his vestigial chiefship for so many decades.

The parish registers from Thaba Nchu tell us something about how people in and around Thaba Nchu and the "eastern Orange Free State" saw themselves in this period. The Christian was given a full name at baptism, including the newly invented Bantu-language South African surname, born of the writing of names of ancestors and professions in church registers. People would be expected to have a say in their own written categorization. For the first fifteen years of record, the Methodist church embraced Christians with Dutch surnames, and Christians with Sechuana-language surnames, together. The evangelical purview – to repeat a point made earlier – was interracial and nonethnized. In their travels with ink stands and registers, pastors married a Barends, a Moster, a Botha and a Matiloe, variously identified as "husbandmen" and "native teacher" or as nothing; a "Sara Maloyae & Koloï"; a "Jason Rakoe and Sara Gabonati," and so on, moving more and more toward Sechuana surnames after the first thirty entries in the mid-1840s.

Up to the later 1840s, the missionaries applied "native" or "of colour" to entries in their registers unpredictably, to some and not others. Thus in 1846 were David Sisinye and Gaitsioe, to be wed, written in as "two persons of colour." The same year, the Reverend Cameron also identified Catrina Majdelena and Elizabeth Cornelius, candidates for baptism, as each "an adult person of colour." Such a designation clearly meant something different from the Grahamstown version – and generally the Cape version – of "Coloured." Soon there were four adults, the Sechuana named persons Mogatsomongwe, Sepani, Makopochoene, and Kiyang ("or Motala"), all identified as "adult persons of colour" coming up for full communion. Many a Van Wyke and Mothibi drew no label, until one Joseph did and then Sabina Motlare did ("of colour") – and someone later penciled in, as Joseph's surname, Thuthoe ("Giraffe," a prominent *rolong*-associated ancestral chief and household). Finally, in 1847 a single list of candidates for baptisms embraced the Dutch-surnamed Meenies (Piet and Antonie) and their friends Moronyane and Metsapula, and all of them are given together merely as "adults" with no more racial qualifiers.

If the registers suggest thereby the uncertainties of racial categories and especially "colour" as a descriptor, they also chart the early development of Barolong and Basuto as tribes on the highveld. A corresponding rise of racism has been noted in the Eastern Cape, in the post-abolition (1840s) context, and in the midst of frontier warfare over land. On the highveld, a tribal identification emerged around the same time.⁵⁶ In September 1847, for the first

⁵⁶ Crais critically discusses the rise of racism in the 1840s in Clifton Crais, *White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-Industrial South Africa: The Making of the Colonial Order in the Eastern Cape, 1770–1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), chap. 7, 143, 182.

time six people were baptized as “adult persons of the Barolong nation.” And yet in 1848, as warfare loomed, four “adults of the Bechuana and Koranna tribes” were baptized in series – Henrich Morutuba, David Ramoeloa, Rebeka Moloeyana, and Fanny Ratsegai, all Sechuana (not Khoe) surnames. As Barolong became tribe in church registers, Bechuana sometimes became a nation. In 1849 and 1850, “an adult woman of the Barolong tribe from a place named Mochudinyana,” and some “Adult Bechuanas of the Barolong tribe,” appeared, who along with “two adult persons of the Bechuana nation” were admitted to fellowship.⁵⁷ The notation “Barolong” or “Barolong tribe” thereafter disappeared until the 1860s and 1870s, suggesting that ethnic labels among Christians, in the period of elite Christendom, became invidious.

In 1848, the flamboyant British governor at the Cape, Sir Harry Smith, annexed all lands up to the Vaal River for the Colony, the entire southern highveld. He left Moshoeshoe’s status unclear. His sudden posture of imperial “*commandement*” was aimed at Andries Pretorius’s Boer trekkers coming up from Natal onto the eastern highveld, and more broadly, at controlling white settlers everywhere inland.⁵⁸ From his point of view the Transvaal was yet hardly more than a network of signeurial power centered on Andries Hendrik Potgieter, in which European patriarchs kidnapped women and children and acculturated them as servants, and “commandos” converted the old domain of the prestige-place associations into private land.⁵⁹ South of the Vaal, Major Henry Warden, appointed as the “British Resident” in command by Harry Smith, undertook to define and fix Moshoeshoe’s malleable western borders, in the interests of “stabilizing” the “Middle” Valley and accommodating colonists who wanted more land.⁶⁰ The enlargement of imperial territory, the expansion of the real authority called “the state” in 1848, directly accompanied Barolong and Basuto tribalization.

Predictably enough, Major Warden’s “Line” took land away from Moshoeshoe’s people and gave it to the Boers. Warden recognized the Boers’ existing (squatters’) farms, and otherwise hewed close to the “Middle” River as a divider, leaving only a jagged fringe of highvelders’ land on the western side of it. Warden also credited much, though not all, of the Wesleyans’ title to

⁵⁷ St. Paul’s, Thaba Nchu, parish registers; and registers held by Cathedral of St. George and St. Michael, Bloemfontein (CGM) Thaba Nchu, Baptisms, 1866–1887; see James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 175.

⁵⁸ Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

⁵⁹ Jane Carrothers on the patchwork knowledge of the Transvaal in “Friederich Jeppe: Mapping the Transvaal c. 1850–1899,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29, 4 (December 2003), 955–75; see esp. the May 1837 map by William Cornwallis Harris, listing “seventeen tribes since disappeared,” and the Jeppe and Merensky map of 1868; and Stan Trapido, “Reflections on Land, Office and Wealth in the South African Republic, 1850–1900,” in Marks and Atmore, eds., *Economy and Society*, 350–69.

⁶⁰ BPP, Colonies, Vol. 37 (February 4 – August 8, 1851), esp. “Correspondence relating to the Assumption of Sovereignty over the Territory between the Vaal and Orange Rivers,” 20–25, enclosure Henry Warden to Harry Smith, Bloemfontein, 6/23/1849.

Thaba Nchu, offering the territory a special status. He had chosen Moroka's men as allies, as "Barolong" foot-soldiers, so it made sense to accept Moroka's protestations that he was not Basuto.⁶¹

THE MIDCENTURY WAR(S) AGAINST THE COLONY

In 1850, the Cape Colony engendered a rebellion that at the time seemed like it might become a mass uprising, a war of the "colored nations" against white people. The Kat River settlers, under Wilem Uithaalder, a métis community with "Kafirs" and "Hottentots" mixed in, joined themselves to the Kei and Fish River ("Xhosa") grasslands chiefs, especially under the leadership of Sandile, and fought the Colony. The Cape had created the Kat River colony of métis, ex-slaves, and Xhosa, and then repudiated it.

Up to that point there were "three major political groupings" in and among the eastern grasslands-based chiefdoms, only one of which the historian Jeff Peires terms Xhosa. Chief Hintsa was the closest thing to a paramount chief before Harry Smith tricked him and killed him, in 1835; after that most of Hintsa's power devolved onto his "Great Councillors, Kwaza (Gxabagxaba) of the Ntshinga and Runei, military head of the Qawuka," just as much as onto Hintsa's son.⁶²

The next generation gathered around the "religious" leader, Mlanjeni, a superchief in the mode of Makana-Nxele (of 1819). His prophecies and decrees were passed along by word of mouth beyond the grasslands peoples and mobilized a truly transethnic following. According to Mlanjeni, the way to Him, for his devoted followers, was like the way to a powerful central court of a great chief: the avenues were many and broad. Sechuana-speakers flocked to him. Lord Somerset's "Hottentot" regiments of Khoespeakers deserted the Colonial command in Mlanjeni's name.⁶³ The official line was that he trafficked in superstitious quackery.

Moshoeshoe respected and kept in touch with Mlanjeni, although he did not directly endorse him.⁶⁴ This was a critical moment for Moshoeshoe. He had relied on the Reverend Eugene Casalis's support in realizing his ambitions, had encouraged his people to attend Christian services, had supported the promulgation of a special orthography. He used Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) men as his own men. At Beersheba there were 450 Christians

⁶¹ Ibid and Moroka, "Where should I graze my cattle?" Cory, PR 3548, James Cameron, "Journal," Cameron to Shaw, 19/1/1849.

⁶² See Chapter 3, "A Comparative Look at the Grasslands of the East"; Jeffrey Peires, *The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of Their Independence* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1981), 88.

⁶³ Reprinted in John A. Williams, ed., *From the South African Past: Narratives, Documents, and Debates* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), as "Khoikhoi-Coloured Peoples Debate Rebellion, 1851," 148–50.

⁶⁴ Leonard Thompson, *Survival in Two Worlds*, 151, calls the war "racist." Robert Ross, "Hermanus Matroos, aka Ngxukumeshe: A Life on the Border," *Kronos*, 30 (November 2004), "Special Issue: Eastern Cape," 47–69, and Ross, "The Kat River Rebellion and

among thousands of highveld farmers, and the Reverend Samuel Rolland was “regarded virtually as a kind of Chief” under Moshoeshoe’s command. And from 1850, the New Testament in “Sesotho” (*se* [language]-*suto*) lodged Basuto’s texts in hundreds of school rooms all over the Valley and the Maluti mountains, ten years after Moffat’s version had shown the way forward.⁶⁵

An independent prophetess, MmaNtsopha (or Mantsopha), implored Moshoeshoe and his people nonetheless to join Mlanjeni’s efforts in full force. His men had first to “kill all light-colored cattle.” Moshoeshoe did not follow this command, but he kept counsel with partisans who did and who turned from establishment Christianity to become Mlanjeni’s disciples. Killing cattle was about expenditure and consumption, and so total commitment. It was also about expecting the return of the dead and the millennium to commence. People heeded a command we have seen before and will come across again: “Kill all light-colored X.”⁶⁶ Europeans were right to worry when they heard of it.

There was arguably one larger conflict at midcentury, among wars discerned variously. There is “the Kat River Rebellion,” and “the Eighth Frontier War” in the east, called “Mlanjeni’s War” by Jeff Peires. There was also what historians of Botswana have called “the Batswana–Boer war” of 1852. Historians of Lesotho treat Moshoeshoe’s dilemma as if it concerned tradition and modernity, or wisdom versus imperial bravado.⁶⁷ According to the men on the spot, however, his conflict was much like the others: it was about the land. Warden demanded that Basuto evacuate before the harvest, ordinarily timed and begun by Moshoeshoe with ceremonies. Too many of Moshoeshoe’s people had sowed their crops already, and Moshoeshoe “ignored” the specifics of Warden’s boundary (the “Kaffir line,” as it was called); thus in his capacity as “chief of the Basuto tribe” he had to be punished.⁶⁸

Warden threatened Moshoeshoe thus: “Depend on it, chief Moshesh, that however strong you may imagine yourself to be, there is a stronger hand

Khoikhoi Nationalism: The Fate of an Ethnic Identification,” *Kronos*, 24 (November 1997), 91–105; Crais, *White Supremacy*, 182 ff.

⁶⁵ Cory, MS 1116, Journal of Francis Owen, April 11, 1838; there was also the Reverend Pellissier’s *St. Mark*. See Clement Doke, “Scripture Translation,” *African Studies*, 17, 2 (1958), 82–99, and Steven Volz, “European Missionaries and Tswana Identity in the 19th Century,” *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies*, 17, 1 (2003), 3–19; Archbell also printed a small *Grammar of the Bechuana Language* (Grahamstown: Minalt and Godlonton, 1837). For Beersheba: Karel Schoeman, ed., *The British Presence in Transorangia, 1845–1854* (Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, Vrijstatia, 1992), 48; and David Coplan, “Erasing History.”

⁶⁶ Mlanjeni’s influence is left out of the “Eighth Frontier War” in *The Reader’s Digest Illustrated History of South Africa*, 3rd ed. (Cape Town: Reader’s Digest, 1992), 134–8.

⁶⁷ Jeffrey Peires, *The Dead Will Arise: Nonqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856–57* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1989); F. Jeffess Ramsay, Barry Morton, and Part Themba Mgadla, *Building a Nation: A History of Botswana from 1800 to 1910* (Gaborone: Longman, 1996), 83–99.

⁶⁸ Timothy Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1996), 269.

ready and able to punish the wicked doings of a people ten times more powerful than the Basutos.”⁶⁹ This was A/ancestor, the one that the missionaries spoke about. On the Basuto side, the chief’s partisans convinced him to retreat further from this authority, and to organize a massive and definitional circumcision school, and to marry more wives. Moshoeshoe obliged them and redoubled his attention to bypassed “customs” while preparing for war.⁷⁰ On the other side, Gert Taaibosch proposed that Moroka, Sekonyela, and Barend Barends fight against Moshoeshoe together, as Christians, as on the basis of their shared Methodism: “therefore they should espouse each other’s quarrels.”⁷¹

Moshoeshoe later explained the nature of his authority thus. “You say that my ancestors Pete and Monaheng are your gods,” he is said to have told his people, “and perhaps after my death you will also say that Moshesh is your god. Ah! Why do you not acknowledge the *Lord of gods*?” Moshoeshoe went to war when MmaNtsopha and other “prophets” said his ancestors or “gods” demanded it. Who then was Lord? “Do you not know that a single tree can produce a multitude of trees?” Moshoeshoe asked aloud. “It is in this way that whites and blacks proceed from one God.”⁷² An ancient tree: only in such a manner – as in an observed natural process – there could be a progenitor, a very long time ago. An active presence ruling blacks and whites together? That Lord was not credible.

The army that Warden put together against Moshoeshoe in June of 1851 – if it could be called an army – was modeled after the old anti-Matebele alliance of 1837, the one that drove Mzilikazi’s chiefdom northward off the South African highveld. The new Warden arrangement aimed to beat back Moshoeshoe’s successful, expansionist state, just as the previous effort had repelled Mzilikazi. “The Matebele” it turned out were a “mobile kingdom,” a tribe. Might the same be shown of “the Basuto”? But this time the Boer auxiliaries were less enthusiastic. Moshoeshoe marshaled armed men from all over his diverse and

⁶⁹ SAL, Mears ms., “Wesleyan Baralong Mission,” 27 (1850).

⁷⁰ Cory, Letterbook of James Cameron, Grahamstown, Cameron to General Secretary WMMS, May 28, 1849, and to Shaw, September 21, 1849 in WMMS S.A. corr. (for quote); Assistant Commissioner to Warden, British Resident, 12/6/1852; Cameron to Assistant Commissioner Bloemfontein, 11/25/1851; W. S. Hogge and C. Mostyn Owen to High Commissioner (HC), Bloemfontein, 12/8/1851; in House of Commons, *Session Papers*, Vol. 10 (47 vols.): *Colonies: Cape of Good Hope; Further Corresp. Re. to the Status of the Orange River Territory*, Session 1852–3, Vol. 66.

⁷¹ WMMS S.A. corr., box 315, 1838–76; 1853; fiche no. 132; Thaba Nchu, Bechuanaland, October 31, 1853. Sanders, *Moshoeshoe*, 276, cited in Epprecht, “*This Matter of Women Is Getting Very Bad*”: *Gender, Development and Politics in Colonial Lesotho* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2000), 24; VAB Nuwe GS 1568: Native Affairs, Moroka, enclosure Moroka to Boshoff, president of the OFS, Thaba Nchu, 23/1/1856.

⁷² Both quotes, Moshoeshoe, from Edwin Smith, *The Mabilles of Basutoland* (London: Hodder and Staughton, 1939), 61, also cited by Stephen Gill, *Short History*, 94, 1853 or 4. *Sic* variations in case (i.e., to Peete). And Percival R. Kirby, ed., *Diary of Sir Andrew Smith, Director of the Expedition Exploring Central Africa, 1834–36*, Vol. 1 (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1939), 205–6.

unprecedented highveld realm, and included regiments in the fierce Shakan or “Nguni” mold. He publicly warned the Winberg Boers: do not assist the British and Moroka, lest you return to find your homes burned to the ground.

Moletsane – the people of Seleka’s struggling nemesis – also came to the Valley and said he had unfairly lost a cattle post to Moroka in some transaction; he attacked Moroka’s herders, killing four people. In the midst of Warden’s maneuvering, the Reverend James Cameron reported that Moroka had “laid claim” to one of the posts by putting a “Native Teacher” of the Gospel there; visiting himself, Cameron remarked that he “never heard” the local people call themselves “vassals of Molitsane.” Agreeing, Warden told Moroka to mobilize a force of men to march on Moletsane’s main settlement. The Reverend Cameron was asked, further, to offer promises of future British aid if Moroka complied, promises that Cameron later bitterly regretted making.⁷³ Fifteen hundred of Moroka’s men set out, mostly mounted or aboard wagons, with a few dozen métis horsemen. Kok’s men were armed as were 282 Boers. They would attack Moletsane and his people, formerly of the lion’s place (*bataung*), now freshly registered as Basuto.

Warden’s force reached the fortified town at Khununyane, better known as Viervoet, at the head of the Leeu River in the northwest of the “Middle” River Valley, on 30 June 1851. Viervoet is a mountain with a very sheer exposure. Two young chiefs, Sefunelo and Tshipinare, Chief Moroka’s senior sons, led their forces around and up a ravine. Sefunelo was born of Moroka’s senior wife, Moilana, by then estranged from the chief; named for his grandfather, he was the presumptive heir. Tshipinare was the grandson of Tawana (of the house of Tshidi), whom Moroka had adopted. Sefunelo’s men came up onto a plateau first and took control of the main site. They killed some of the unprepared men there. They found woven pots of beer prepared as if for a celebration, full to the rim, and they drank. It had been a fairly easy victory. The borderlands had come to them and they had survived. Perhaps this was the way things worked; one fought for the British, for oneself, and for the Boers, all at once. Night fell and many men slept out in the open, stupefied.

Then all at once the dream was shattered and Moroka’s men awoke to face Moshoeshoe’s sons Letsie and Molapo with the chief’s half-brother Paulus Moperi leading their warriors in the predawn gloom. They came out of nowhere, these fighters who had embraced Mlanjeni’s more motivated God, and overwhelmed the men of Seleka and drove scores of them forward at knife-point till they reached Viervoet’s cliff, where they were herded, and pushed, drunken and dazed, slipping and falling suddenly to their deaths. Tshipinare eluded capture, and survived. But Chake, Moroka’s senior brother, perished that horrible way, along with over a hundred others of the chiefship’s

⁷³ Cory, WMMS S.A. corr., MS 11115, Cameron to Vowe, Thaba Nchu, June 22, 1850; Cameron “Journal,” 57, copy of Cameron to William Shaw, 19/1/1849; Cameron charging Boers took the Bushmen children as slaves: Cory, Cameron Letterbook, 117, 132–3, Cameron to Major Warden, British Resident, Thaba Nchu, 19/7/1850; and to G. M Huart, 26/3/1850.

finest men, the best of the succeeding generation.⁷⁴ Sefunelo, Moroka's son, was among the unfortunate.

In the winter of 1851 Moroka dared not return to Thaba Nchu. The war left him homeless and afraid of his men's angry widows. As in the past, Molestane helped sack the people-of-Seleka's court in the chief's absence, making matters much worse; and as in the dark days of 1823 or 1826, when Sopane, Pule, and Tshabadira were killed, the people of Seleka "squatted like Bushmen" on the Modder River, destitute. This time there was a Bloemfontein, and they looked there for aid.⁷⁵ While the British finished off the rest of the uprising against their imperial authority, they nonetheless allowed Moshoeshoe's kingdom to survive, intact. Bogachu, observing the situation unfold, reserved his thirty or so households from the melée and detoured north of the Vaal, to the territory now freed of the Matebele, the old "Barolong country." Ultimately 200 European troops and their rowdy "Fingo" auxiliaries were deployed just to escort Moroka and his remaining people back to Thaba Nchu, in October, with the first rains. The loss was called "Major Warden's defeat" in the imperial literature, but among the people most affected it was simply the "falling" (*tigele*); for a century after, mentioning it caused men to drop their voices to a hush.⁷⁶

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The rebel Uithaalder at one point wrote to Waterboer, Kok, and Hendricks, in the interest of widening the midcentury uprising. Kok's refusal is on record: he said the war brought disrepute on "Coloured" people. If we may be permitted a single detour into the domain of the counterfactual, consider what might have unfolded if Kok, rather than rebuking Uithaalder, had responded positively, and taken the Griqua into a war with the Colony, passing the message along. The already multiethnic dimension of Mlanjeni's sway, the participation of men mobilized in defense of "we ... Hottentots," the coincidence of Sandile's leadership with Moshoeshoe's – in such a context might not Moshoeshoe have pursued a grander strategy? Would not Sekwati, the chief of the people of Pedi facing the Boers in the northeast, have followed – Sekwati who identified himself as "one of Moshoeshoe's men"? Several prominent chiefs announced themselves similarly. Moroka was rumored to be in Moshoeshoe's camp in early 1854; might he have turned earlier? War was also afoot in the Marico. Even Faku of the eastern people-of-Mpondo was suspected of sending tribute to Mlanjeni.⁷⁷ It seems to me that 1850–52 was a critical moment on the

⁷⁴ Moperi is but one spelling; Mopeli is the *Sesuto/Sesotho* spelling, Mopedi the commonsense phonetic version: "person of Pedi." Cf. Molema, *Chief Moroka*, 79–80; Sanders, *Moshoeshoe*, 207, 332.

⁷⁵ WITS, Cullen Library, S. M. Molema Papers, authorial notes for *Chief Moroka and His Times* (n.d.), ms., 23.

⁷⁶ Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 357–8.

⁷⁷ Lye and Murray, *Transformations*, 50 ff.; Timothy J. Stapleton, *Faku: Rulership and Colonialism in the Mpondo Kingdom (c. 1780–1876)* (Waterloo, Ontario, Canada: Wilifred Laurier University Press, 2001), 109; Sanders, *Moshoeshoe*, 207; and see Paul Schroeder,

highveld. It was a tipping point, before which popular control over the land in traditional highveld terms might still be broadly defended, and open ground staked to chiefs, but after which more creative approaches became necessary. It was a moment when highveld people might have heard the tocsin, but they did not.

In fact, Moshoeshoe's belligerence never became total, and he was soon back in the empire's uneasy embrace. In order to salvage his reputation afterward, two special agents were put in charge of reporting on "why" war had happened, Mostyn Owen and William S. Hogge. The Owen and Hogge commission targeted Major Warden in their report, blaming his administrative incompetence. Implausibly, they suggested he had been misled by Native-loving, Methodist settlers like the Archbells and Camerons.⁷⁸ They did not point to land speculation and British desires for colonial settlement as more profound causes for the war, as surely they might. Merino sheep earned unprecedented income for landlords to the south, accounting for over three-quarters of the Eastern Cape's total exports, and the sheep soon grazed the Boers' new Caledon Valley farms. Yet vexingly for the Boers, "the Basuto" also continued to multiply around them, competing for the same land, which soon tripled in value.

Taking advantage of the immediate colonial peace, Moshoeshoe then destroyed the Methodist-métis axis of Taaibosch and Sekonyela, moving his Basuto offensive all the way to the Modder River, refraining only from occupying Thaba Nchu. After the dust cleared, even Moseme, the beleaguered chief who had welcomed Moroka's people to Thaba Nchu, declared that he was also "a Mosuto" once again.⁷⁹

A fresh colonial administration under the reins of George Cathcart ordered troops again to war, again to stop or redirect the growth of the Basuto citizenry. Moshoeshoe beat them back at Thaba Bosiu and Berea, and then wrote Cathcart asking to be placed, as a ruler of his people, under the sovereign authority of the Queen.⁸⁰ This gambit succeeded. At the time, it was significant that Cathcart was able to cut Britain free from South African entanglements for an entire generation. The Empire renounced its claim to control the Boers and reduced its control over Cape Town, granting the Colony a proper parliament. The Orange River Colony became the Sovereignty and then Orange Free State in 1854, "the vehicle of an informal, if often insecure, imperial hegemony in southern Africa," in the historian Tim Keegan's

"Embedded Counterfactuals and World War I as an Unavoidable War," chap. 8 in Paul Schroeder, ed., *Systems, Stability, and Statecraft: Essays on the International History of Modern Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

⁷⁸ And Allison, and Shaws: cf. Thompson, *Survival*, 156, referencing the papers of Sir George Grey (Durham University Library).

⁷⁹ Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, 271; Murray, *Black Mountain*, 16; *mosuto* being the singular of Basuto. And Schoeman, ed., *British Presence in Transorangia*, 100-1, citing anonymous in an 1853 issue of *The Friend of the Free State*.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, and thanks to David Coplan.

words.⁸¹ The Transvaal became the South African Republic (ZAR), a loose *herrenvolk* network set amid semi-independent highveld chiefdoms.

Chief Moshoeshoe continued to attract settlers. As he faced down the Boers' and the métis commandos, highveld farmers collected behind him, building new homes, putting new land to use. They imported hundreds and hundreds of heavy iron plows. They sold maize and wheat to the Boers and the métis people living around them. In peacetime, when markets were open, their fields were the thickest, their scotch-carts the fullest.⁸² More than 60,000 people looked to Moshoeshoe as their chief. In contrast, meanwhile, Moroka's position grew more precarious. The Wesleyans at Grahamstown thought the Free State would take over Thaba Nchu at any moment.⁸³ The territory fell in population to four or five thousand people, an all-time low.

A key moment in the transition to an inscribed Basuto ethnicity was Hogge's 1852 meetings with belligerents, the minutes of which were deposited in the Orange River Sovereignty's archives: "Molitsane, Paulus Moperi, and Molapo and David, sons of chief Moshesh," are listed as attending. Moletsane the lion (*tau*), soon to declare himself a Christian; Paulus Moperi and David (Masupha), post-Christians, their names spelled out by their parishes when they were boys. Armed men, in shirts and trousers, they oversaw fields and houses in territory to which they had no more primordial claim than any other people. They were the founders of the Basuto tribe; anything more "authentic" – ponies and blankets and straw hats – was invented later on.⁸⁴

INDUSTRY, WAR, AND THE LOSS OF THE MIDDLE VALLEY

Many highveld peasants prospered, not just in Basutoland or the Free State. Focusing on Herschel, a district in the settler territories of the southeast, the historian Colin Bundy showed how ordinary (black) farmers in the 1860s were already busy increasing their harvests in response to markets subsequently expanded and deepened by mining centers.⁸⁵ From Shoshong (in

⁸¹ Keegan, *Colonial*, 277, 279. See also Judy Kimble, *Migrant Labour and Colonial Rule in Basutoland* (Grahamstown: Rhodes University, Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1999).

⁸² William A. Hance, ed., *The Geography of Modern Africa*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 542.

⁸³ Cory, Cameron Letterbook, Thaba Nchu, November 29, 1849; and WMMS S.A. corr., J. Ludorf, Thaba Nchu, October 31, 1853, Bechuanaland 1838–76, fiche no. 132.

⁸⁴ Thompson, *Survival*, 157, and KAB, Theal, *Basutoland Records*, Vol. V (unpublished), i.e., 168–9; and BPP, House of Commons, Session papers, Vol. 10, Colonies, Cape of Good Hope, Session 1852/3, Vol. LXVI, Further Correspondence Relating to the State of the Orange River Territory.

⁸⁵ The literature includes first of all W. M. Macmillan, *The South African Agrarian Problem and Its Historical Development* (Pretoria: State Library, 1974 [Johannesburg: 1919]), as pointed out by William Beinart and Peter Delius ("Introduction"), in William Beinart, Peter Delius, and Stanley Trapido, eds., *Putting a Plough to the Ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa, 1850–1930* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1986), 2–6. See Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (London: Heinemann, 1979); Tim Keegan,

Bechuanaland/Botswana) down to Aliwal North the same was true. Ordinary highveld household-heads brought grain to new markets when they could get access to them. Unfortunately, a series of military campaigns in the “Middle” River Valley placed fresh colonists on the land and eliminated chiefs’ control of the people on it.⁸⁶

The change did not all come at once. In 1865, President Johannes Brand of the Orange Free State, the son of a Speaker of the Cape Parliament, began to attack Moshoeshoe’s subchiefs. He opened a campaign soon known as the “War of the Cannon,” only to be maneuvered into a detente. Brand’s withdrawal left Chief Moroka haplessly “to hold the lion [*tau*: Moshoeshoe] by the ears,” unprotected and vulnerable. Paulus Moperi, Moletsane, and the other Basuto lords continued to flourish and raided Barolong herds with impunity.⁸⁷

Diamonds were discovered at Kimberley, along the lower Vaal, in 1867, the same year the Boers returned to warfare in the “Middle” Valley with the aim of completing their conquests. For several years, even the biggest mining “camps” at the Vaal River were modest affairs, capable of quickly packing up and moving on. “Restaurants, a circus, photographic saloons, inns, and surgeries are mixed up with the little square tents where diamond buyers sit with their scales.”⁸⁸ Basuto and Barolong (and people of Pedi and others) traveled from the war-scarred highveld to Kimberley’s pits, looking for money for guns and cattle. At the threshold of the coming industrial era, Brand warned the British that he could not allow Basuto on the east side of the “Middle” River any connection with those who were “allowed” to remain on *his* side, the west.

In their final campaigns in 1869, the Boers moved up the east bank of the river to the foothills of the Maluti mountains to smash the Basuto’s capital town and burn their crops; the British High Commissioner barely managed to stop them.⁸⁹ This completed the closure of the trans-Orangia borderlands, leading to the strategic monopolization of land and labor by settlers. It was not a natural process. Moshoeshoe lost the entire “Middle” Valley (thenceforth

“The Sharecropping Economy, African Class Formation and the 1913 Natives’ Land Act in the Highveld Maize Belt,” in Shula Marks and Richard Rathbone, eds., *Industrialization and Social Change in South Africa: African Class Formation, Culture, and Consciousness, 1870–1930* (London: Longman, 1982), 196, dates the shift to sharecropping to the 1880s. Excepting Nigel Penn’s work, the English-language historiography of the highveld in South Africa is largely about later periods, when production rose: e.g., Keegan, *Rural Transformations*; William Beinart, *The Political Economy of Pondoland, 1860–1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). Colin Murray’s *Black Mountain: Land, Class and Power in the Eastern Orange Free State, 1880s–1980s* (Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand Press, 1992), offers a scrupulous account of the farms comprising Thaba Nchu.

⁸⁶ Giliomee, *Afrikaners*, only says war “broke out,” 182.

⁸⁷ VAB Nuwe GS 1568 Native Affairs, Moroka: Moroka to Brand, 6/4/65 (6 April 1865, etc.); 7/4/65; 2/6/65; Timothy Creswell (missionary) to Brand, 14/8/65; Moroka to Brand, 29/12/65; also cited in Wales, “The Relationship,” 219.

⁸⁸ WITS CPSA AB 2259/Gd1.1 W. Crisp, Vol. 1, 1867–73, Crisp to Father, Du Toit’s Pan, Diamond Fields, Whitsun Tuesday, 1872; Wales, “The Relationship,” 228.

⁸⁹ Thompson, *Survival*, 149, features another explanation. The capital had shifted from Butha-Butha to Thaba Bosiu.

the Caledon), and a sizable population therein. Most of his people fled to the east side of Warden's line into the mountains. After this, one speaks of a "mountain kingdom." Immigrants from many different parts of the highveld moved up into the heights of Lesotho; they plowed every available plot of arable soil, farming as they had in the more fertile valley. Moletsane was driven into Lesotho, and other Barolong settled in the Hermon area near him. Immigration into Lesotho then slackened.

Far to the northeast, the chiefship of the people of Pedi on the Steelpoort River also expanded its territory, in a kind of parallelism with the Basuto. The Pedi chiefship successfully defined the Christians among them as people of Pedi. It repulsed the Transvaal Boers' attacks, throwing the Boer state into crisis. The British Empire then effected the "annexation" of the troubled Transvaal (the South African Republic), through the agency of Theophilus Shepstone, in 1877. As was the case with Warden, Shepstone favored light colonists over dark ones and tried to roll back the growth of the people-of-Pedi chiefdom, already surrounded by forts. Finally in 1879, with infantry drawn from the people of Mswati to the north, the British defeated the chiefship outright, and took its land.⁹⁰

In mountainous Lesotho redelineated to exclude its best farmland, there were yet over 125,000 Basuto, perhaps a fifth of the population of the Bantu-speaking farmers residing on the wide South African highveld.⁹¹ However, on land now claimed by armed Boers in the valley, in the 1870s, around 30,000 Basuto farmers remained (or, having initially fled, they returned to such land). These people became "loyal Basuto," a novel designation. Born of a lack of contact with the chiefdom, a disconnect demanded by Brand, the idea rendered Basuto as fully tribal. The loyal Basuto often found themselves homeless, or were pushed into new regimes of labor in which they had to struggle to survive.⁹² Specifically, white landlords began to force them to hand over half of whatever *muid*-weight of grain they produced each season. They demanded more production, too. In certain districts, some people, especially men, were able to prosper as sharecroppers in these circumstances, but women and children suffered, sometimes even in the midst of apparent plenty.⁹³ Women's work output entered a flow that

⁹⁰ Peter Delius, *A Lion Amongst the Cattle: Reconstruction and Resistance in the Northern Transvaal* (London: Heinemann, 1996), 126–54.

⁹¹ Elizabeth Eldredge, *A South African Kingdom: The Pursuit of Security in Nineteenth-Century Lesotho* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 62 ff.

⁹² Thus Basuto were "cleared" from Menschvretersberg's thirty Boer farms: Wales, "The Relationship," 225, 231; Tim Keegan, "Trade, Accumulation and Impoverishment: Mercantile Capital and the Economic Transformation of Lesotho and the Conquered Territory, 1870–1920," *Journal of South African Studies*, 12, 2 (April 1986), 196–216.

⁹³ Wales, "The Relationship," 231; Clifton Crais and Helen Bradford have made this point in circulated papers. The paradigm of the Mosotho woman farmer had a major impact on social studies in the developing world; Ester Boserup, *Women's Role in Economic Development* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970); and Elizabeth Eldredge, "Women in Production: The Economic Role of Women in Nineteenth-Century Lesotho," *Signs*, 16, 4 (*Women, Family, State, and Economy in Africa*: Summer, 1991), 707–31.

increased in volume in response to senior men's arrangements, in part for other people, for plowing and transporting grain. Women worked harder, to harvest and process more, of which they controlled less.⁹⁴

While some patriarchs' powers enlarged, many chiefs found themselves under siege. Set as he was in the emerging grain basket of the valley, Moroka had a foot in both camps. Under the treaty drawn up before the "War of the Cannon," chief Moroka and the Orange Free State president could each ask the other for the extradition of criminals, which Moroka tried to use as a tool to keep his people from leaving his chiefdom and going to Kimberley, or to white people's farms on formerly Basuto land. Eighteen miles from Thaba Nchu Town lay the border, however, and people crossed it at will. Gradually the Boers exerted their rights to withhold from these travelers pasture for their cattle; and then firewood; and then, as the wilderness was reimagined, hunting rights (which became "poaching").⁹⁵ The Free State denied travelers free passage, permitting even the "assistant field-cornet" to tax Barolong by issuing sixpence stamps; at the same time, Barolong were discouraged from leaving their employers and returning to the road. Meanwhile Moroka was debarred any revenue-raising activities and told not even to sell off impounded cattle, because his Boer neighbors objected.⁹⁶

Although Moroka inveighed publicly against circumcision lodges, the chief in fact permitted the "schools" to assemble, ranking all the participating households in the process. Even one of the Christians' star pupils, Jacob Bogachu, chose to submit to the procedures.⁹⁷ Some scions did not, however, attend, and dissensions emerged between households and generations. One junior-court chief, Jacob Ngakantsi, styled himself "chief of the Batlhaping and Barolong tribes," and made contact with the Boers of the South African

⁹⁴ My thinking is influenced by Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1992), chap. 4, stimulated also by Mona Etienne, "Women and Men, Cloth and Colonization," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, 65, 17 (I) (1975), 41–64, for which I thank Nancy Rose Hunt; and Jane Guyer, "Female Farming in Anthropology and African History," in Micaela di Leonardo, ed., *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 257–77; Belinda Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900–1983* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1991), and Charles van Onselen, *The Seed Is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper, 1894–1985* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1997).

⁹⁵ VAB, Nuwe GS 1569: Moroka to Brand, 23/1/1856; 3/3/69; 7/9/71; 7/7/73.

⁹⁶ Wales, "The Relationship," 219; VAB, Nuwe GS 1569: Moroka to Brand, 28/4/1864, 7/9/64, and GS Nuwe 1568, Tship. to Brand, 5/2/61; VAB Nuwe GS 1568 Native Affairs, Moroka: Moroka to Joseph Allison, 19/6/1863. Hunting parties and warring parties were put together in the same way, and both were outlawed. See also Shaun Milton, "The Transvaal Beef Frontier: Environment, Markets, and the Ideology of Development, 1902–1942," in Thomas Griffiths and Libby Robin, *Ecology and Empire: Environmental History of Settler Societies* (St. Louis: University of Washington Press, 1997), 199–214.

⁹⁷ Circumcision: WITS CPSA AB 2259/Gd.1.1 W. Crisp, 1867–1873, copy of Crisp to Mr. and Miss Polts (siblings), Thaba Nchu, July 23, 1869; and Crisp to Father, Thaba Nchu, September 4, 1869.

Republic on that basis. In 1871, he laid claim to the diamond fields and tried to “declare war” on the Free State.⁹⁸ At the same time, chief Matlabi returned to Thaba Nchu to agitate for the rest of his kinsmen to follow him away again to “Barolong country.” Many were prepared to do so.

Moroka escalated his rhetoric and called Matlabi’s movement “an insurrection.” Keen highveld observers, however, saw a classic struggle between two “brothers,” Matlabi and Moroka. European commentators were perplexed at this reading, given that they were actually distant cousins. Isaac Schapera and Adam Kuper have shown that in modern times, close-kinship terms such as brother could indicate classes of people rather than uterine fraternity. In [Chapter 2](#), we have already located classificatory, pragmatic brotherhood in ancient highveld politics. Moroka’s and Matlabi’s competition intensified after the debates hidden behind the partial generational circumcision. They became feuding brothers, the folkloric Masilo and Masiloane, the quasi-historical Seleka and Tshidi, the categorical Tebele and Tebeyane.⁹⁹

One of the implications of reading the conflict as fraternal was to avoid murder. Brother chiefs were not supposed to kill one another. Facilitating the parting of sections of a chiefship without fratricide was a strength of the ranked twin-court paradigm. In 1874, Moroka’s and Matlabi’s partisans briefly came to blows, fighting in the lanes, but without significant effect. Two other plausible heirs then died unexpectedly, and Moroka became ill, and the chiefship was thrown open to challenge. This thread is taken up again, at the end of this chapter.¹⁰⁰ In brief, President Brand backed Moroka in retaining power, but Matlabi, with his brother Motuba, and with Jacob Ngakantsi, the chiefly claimant already mentioned, received permission from President T. F. Burgers of the South African Republic in the Transvaal to resettle the Vaal-Harts hinterland. Brand demanded that Moroka let them go, and Moroka did. His authority in his own domain was further weakened.

CHRISTIANITY AND ETHNICITY, PART II: THE END OF CHIEFLY POWER

In the 1870s, when political authority began to leave the packed dung of the court places, much of the social behavior that bound people to each other, and

⁹⁸ Wales, “The Relationship,” 232; and VAB SS v.O R1571/71, Moroka to South African Republic (SAR), 7/2/1871, [David] Ngakantsi to SAR, 17/1/1871, 14/1/1871, disavowing Jacob Ngakantsi.

⁹⁹ Wales, “The Relationship,” 244, citing Montshiwa (of the Tshidi house) and *The Friend of the Free State*, the main OFS English-language newspaper.

¹⁰⁰ Death of Tshabadira (1874): VAB, GS 1570, old ser. 1403, bk. 1, Moroka to Brand, 10/11/74; Tau (Lion) perished in early childhood. Moroka ill: WITS CPSA AB 2259/Gd1.1 W. Crisp, 1867–1873, Crisp letterbook, March 22, 1875, Moroka to John Molekane. S. M. Molema, *Chief Moroka*, 152 ff., Wales, “The Relationship,” 268. It is not clear why Wales does not list Tau as Moilana’s (MmaTau’s) senior son and Sefunelo’s and Samuel’s elder brother; or why Murray (*Black Mountain*, 24) doubts that Tshipinare “raised up seed” for Sefunelo to produce Motlhware.

to their leadership, became ritual and custom; it was then, some decades after the commencement of the ascent of ethnic identity, that Christianity began seriously to proliferate in the Caledon Valley. The sociologist Max Weber remarked that peasants become religious only when they are threatened with enslavement or proletarianization, and this was the story on the highveld.¹⁰¹ Only when chiefship and ancestral belonging stopped *being*, in real space, did Christians refit these ideas to make a different kind of sense to ordinary farmers. Christianity then spread among *the Barolongs* and *the Basutos*, and among “all the tribes.”

The growth in church attendance was sudden. At Thaba Nchu in 1869, with four decades of missionary work already behind them, the Methodists offered monthly communion to only around 200 people. They had merely doubled the size of the congregation from the time of the move to Thaba Nchu nearly forty years before, while the total population had risen to about 12,000. Such a record was not a cause for congratulations.

Then the Anglican Church arrived in Thaba Nchu, and Methodist evangelism reignited. Christianity grew fast at the beginning of the 1870s. The Anglican church went from having 35 “converts” in 1870, a few years after its arrival, to having 289 full members only four years later. The Methodist church also grew its membership to 606 by 1873. Preachers spoke to greater and greater numbers of people in this period. According to the Methodist Reverend John Daniel, in 1870 he preached to 900 in Wittenbergen, 200 at Aliwal North, and 650 at Moshaneng, north of the Vaal (where Moroka’s son Koko married); to 153 at Fauresmith; and to 1,900 people at Thaba Nchu. Three years later, Sabbath congregations in Thaba Nchu routinely reached a thousand on Sunday.¹⁰² Daniel guessed his sermons reached 3,000 people in Thaba Nchu in all in 1873: it follows that most of the people who heard him came most every week. As people lived less in one another’s company, fanning out to white farms from Thaba Nchu and other old highveld centers, going to church became more important to them. At the same time, more of them prayed also where they lived, in smaller and more private circumstances, engaging with other nearby Christians. At the end of the 1870s, perhaps one in four adults participated regularly in some Christian forum; in Thaba Nchu the Anglicans had 500 full members, and the Methodists over 1,000.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ In Max Weber and S. N. Eisenstadt, *Max Weber on Charisma and Institution Building*, ed. S. N. Eisenstadt (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1968), 284.

¹⁰² All information is compiled from Cory, the Circuit Reports of the Methodist Missionary Society, including of Thaba Nchu and the wider area, and correspondence (including WITS: CPSA and letterbooks, noting however that William Crisp’s carbon letterbook is largely illegible), matched to parish registers including St. Paul’s and CGM when possible. People of Ngwaketse and their allies dominated Moshaneng.

¹⁰³ Among them one notes the names Bogachu, Seiphemo, Moroka, Molema, Pule, Goronyane, and Fenyang; figure from 1833: Backhouse, *Narrative*, 413.

Critical for the future of Christianity in the Caledon Valley were the Methodist outstations now opened from Thaba Nchu as a base: thirty-five “leaders,” and four “substations.” Not all of them are represented in the surviving registers, but from their official tally, in one year, the Methodists gained 141 men and women in their prime (“We see no old men come forward,” Daniel said), and all those candidates ended their probation as full members.¹⁰⁴ Slightly more of them were female than not. While Moroka’s and his “brother” Matlabi’s men fought one another, the Reverend Daniel was deploying their kin to dispense the Gospel among those “who never frequent the House of God,” who lived “too far” from any big congregation to worship. Thirty years before, when Cameron’s assistant (a “Basuto”) preached in such places, the old men chased him away, threatening to beat him to death with their knobkerries.¹⁰⁵ Now the Reverend Daniel began “a work of revival” and saw an “outpouring of the Spirit,” no matter what tribe the evangelist came from, and met with no overt opposition at all.¹⁰⁶

Besides the French Protestants Moshoeshoe allowed the Roman Catholics, who were “tolerant” of polygamy and uninterested in female education, to build a church a day’s walk from his capital town.¹⁰⁷ The Anglican church also flourished and quickly seeded new outposts. When Father William Crisp, traveling along the Vaal river on one of his several “missionary journeys,” went to search for their evangelist David Maremane, he indicated his destination as “David’s village,” in the same field of power as other local configurations. “I soon came to a village of some Griquas and found I must go some distance further – then I met some Batlhapiñ lads ... [then] a native who accosted me by my name & said he had seen me at Thaba Nchu, [as he was coming] from service at David’s.”¹⁰⁸ A mixed congeries of people in the Valley, up onto the highveld, and over the Molopo River still held on, still continued to rule their own. Sometimes they were vetted as Christian, sometimes not.

Barolong, as a word spoken south of the Vaal, could designate many different kinds of sociality and registered on several political levels. In 1869, the *Friend of the Free State* was the biggest newspaper in the Orange Free State, publishing in English, the dominant language of the towns there until the end of the century. It ran the following letter, arguing that Moroka’s land should be bought, and he and his people forced out:

¹⁰⁴ Cory, MS 15619, 1873 Thaba Nchu, Rept. of Thaba Nchu for the year 1873, 553–4; 1871, cited below. Thanks to the Yale Ph.D. history students in a course taught in 1998, esp. Thomas McDow, Mieke Ziervoegel, Wiebe Boer, and Katie Scharf.

¹⁰⁵ Cory, PR 3548, James Cameron, “Journal,” 8/5/41; yet just south of Moshoeshoe’s border, men in the chief’s court hosted a Wesleyan pastor and then bade the women “disperse lest they should become converted,” Cory, MS 15618, Circuit Reports (WMMS), 1871, Wittenbergen. There were 1,009 Anglicans in Thaba Nchu in 1878, according to the CGM records.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. and Cory, MS 15620, Report of Thaba Nchu Circuit for 1874, 581–2.

¹⁰⁷ Epprecht, “*This Matter*,” 39–42.

¹⁰⁸ WITS CPSA AB 2259/ Gd 1.2 1873 (Crisp), “Journal of a mission journey in Becoana Land,” 1875; and AB 2259, W. Crisp, Logbook of Letters, 1873, W. H. R. Bevan to Crisp, June 21,

thus getting rid of *his whole tribe* for good and all. *The Barolong* have, it is true, but a small strip of territory; but still it is good.... *Moroka's tribe* must sooner or later sell out and join *the remainder of the tribe* beyond the Vaal.

These phrases (which I have italicized) mean different things at each beat of this passage, and yet are made interchangeable, as the ethnic paradigm demands.¹⁰⁹

Someone in Paarl could yet speak of “kafirs from Basutoland” in the mid-1860s; however, Basuto by itself was already standard in most contexts. After Moshoeshoe died in 1870, Basuto were still (in 1876) able to hold out for better wages, projecting a tribal unity and further defining themselves, “loyal” and not-so, as one and the same thing.¹¹⁰ Then, in a convergence with “Barolong,” the loss of land and the dawn of religious pluralism produced the tribalized Basuto in their final form. Consider that two Basuto men left Lesotho and went down to Umtata, and received the sacrament at the Reverend Henry Callaway’s Anglican mission, and then returned to the Maluti Mountains for the duration of the “Gun War” prosecuted by the British (1881) against the Basuto, intending to conduct services throughout the conflict as they saw fit. Not only were they not executed by Moshoeshoe for treason, but they were left alone and later granted permission to continue their pastorate. Such indulgence marks not only the birth of unfettered Christianity among Basuto but also the apotheosis (in the final register) of “Basotho,” an identity which might persevere no matter what religion or political orientation its members selected.¹¹¹

COLOURED(S) REVISITED

“Coloureds” as an affiliation on the other hand continued to meet with resistance, including in Thaba Nchu. Most of the Platberg métis people, whom Moshoeshoe had briefly impressed into his defensive forces, went to live directly under Moroka at Thaba Nchu; they had quit the jurisdiction of the Orange Free State specifically because they refused to occupy the status “Coloureds,” which was extended to them.¹¹² The Grahamstown Methodist church for a while noted hopefully that a “Half-Caste” congregation in Thaba Nchu was “growing in numbers,” and the Bishop in Bloemfontein wished to consider Thaba Nchu the regional “headquarters for [Anglican] Coloured mission work.” But there is little subsequent evidence of “Coloured” Christianity

1873; cf. Gb2.2 (Beckett), “Rough Outline of Our Journey, [1890].” See Doc. A: Gd 1.1 Vol. 1, enclosing Crisp’s printed catechism book, headed “Thapelo ea Morena,” in which *pusho* (rule) is projected on earth and *legodimong* (up in heaven), and all else closely follows Moffat.

¹⁰⁹ *Friend of the Free State*, April 19, 1869; Eldredge, *A South African Kingdom*, 63.

¹¹⁰ Cory, MS 15621, WMMS Circuit Report, 1876.

¹¹¹ Chief Letsie; Oxford University, Bodleian Library, United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG), [series] E [Missionary reports] 36: 1881, Crisp to Bloemfontein, Thaba Nchu, 31/12/1881.

¹¹² Wales, “The Relationship,” 202.

distinct from Native or Barolong or other Christianities in Thaba Nchu.¹¹³ Instead, it was convenient to continue to offer services in Dutch and English for interested communicants without further restrictions. Father Charles Clulee, who took over both the Anglicans' evangelical training school and the "Half-Caste" program in Bloemfontein, described his own (Bloemfontein) parish in 1868 in these ad hoc terms: "The education of both white & coloured children is under my charge, & the instruction of the Dutch speaking natives & of the Caffres in the Christian Faith, comprising services both in Dutch & Caffre (Sechuana)."¹¹⁴

In the same period, however, Clulee also complained, concretely, about Fauresmith's "Coloureds ... chiefly Griquas, though 'mixed up' with Hottentots, Bastaards, and Bushmen," because they fraternized with "low and vicious white men[,] the refuse of European society." Indeed they became "a most good-for-nothing race of people, given over to drunkenness and abominable profligacy." It was the proximity of an underclass of whites that seemed to bring Colouredness into focus. In 1875, Clulee helped train "Native Evangelists" expressly for the "Bechuana District" of pastoral work, and whether they were Coloured, or Fingoes and Bechuana, or "Caffres" did not in fact matter very much once again – either to him or to the draconian pass laws of the Free State. In this same spirit the 1852 Sand River Convention, signed by the Free State with Great Britain, had disclaimed all previous alliances with "coloured nations" north of the Vaal.

The beginning of the 1870s saw a shift away from these generalizations and toward a more physicalized differentiation and separation of tribes, nonetheless: tribes as stable entities that might be catalogued and known in an administrative framework. The racist separation of Coloureds from "Natives" then and only then began to pervade ordinary highveld discourse. Made into natural forms, almost species of indigenes, "the Barolong" or "the Basotho" might "have" beliefs, customs, and ideas, notions, which while tenacious, were also "losing their hold on the minds" of the people as they moved toward "modern" life.¹¹⁵ This is still the dominant paradigm in public discourse for understanding historical change in colonized places. From the tribal base to "modernity," the individual's trajectory conformed to the narrative of civilizational progress put forth by missionaries. In the Reverend Daniel's words, at Thaba Nchu was "a large native population arbitrarily ruled by Native law,"

¹¹³ Oxford, United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG) (series) D [Original letters received] 38: 1867–71, Twells, Bloemfontein, 16/8/1867; and Crisp to Bishop Webb, Thaba Nchu, 13/2/1872; Nicholas Southey, "Uncovering Homosexuality in Colonial South Africa: The Case of Bishop Twells," *South African Historical Journal*, 36 (May, 1997), 48–67.

¹¹⁴ USPG (series) E 24 1868–9: C. Clulee, Bloemfontein, 30/9/1869.

¹¹⁵ See Saul Dubow, *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), for the 1890s; Cory, WMMS Circuit Report, Thaba Nchu, 1873, and "Thaba Nchu Native Progress and Work," 473; and 635, 1876: Circuit Report, Aliwal North; Saul Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge: Science, Sensibility, and White South Africa, 1820–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 121–61.

hovering in a transition “from barbarism to civilization,” because so many had only recently converted “from a low & debasing form of paganism.”¹¹⁶ The “tribe” in his and others’ sense was a biological inheritance, ruled only “arbitrarily,” for this was what Native law was: rule by the dead past, over Africans in the present. The Barolong were “the most advanced” of tribes, having got rid of many beliefs; on the other hand, they were like an infant “casting off swaddling clothes,” naked and vulnerable.¹¹⁷ Tribal customs, “arbitrary” law, and tribal religion, were shed like garments from the physical self, which then began to mature. Coloureds were excluded from this discourse.

To repeat a point: tribal thinking on the ground emerged in multiethnic places governed by racist authorities. For what increasingly defined the bulk of supposed highveld tribespeople after the 1870s – outside Lesotho – was hardly that they lived *in* tribes; rather they worked and resided *away* from their tribes. They fraternized with others who were not like them, because they lived not under a single, legitimate, authority nameable in the way they once named power. And so when the “scientific” effort to photograph tribal types came to South Africa, it was the penal colony, the seasonal farm-labor lean-to, and the mine barracks that were the best places to take pictures.¹¹⁸

PHOTOGRAPHY AND TRIBAL TYPES

In particular, Gustavus Fritsch, a pioneer of glass dry-plate photography out of doors, compiled a visual and lexical registration of highveld tribes in the Cape, on Robben Island, on Cape farms, and at Kimberley. Like other leading German “antihumanist” anthropologists, Fritsch deprecated genealogies and origin narratives as will-o’-the-wisps, thinking only to collect hard data; beyond photography, he moved to the exclusive study of measurements of human skulls.¹¹⁹ In adopting photography in the 1870s, from the start Fritsch adopted tribalism and

¹¹⁶ Cory, WMMS Circuit Rept., Thaba Nchu, 1873, 15–16; and 1877.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Elizabeth Edwards, “Photographic ‘Types’: The Pursuit of Method,” *Visual Anthropology* 3, 2–3 (1990), 235; Martin Jay, “Scopic Regimes of Modernity,” in Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978), 123 ff.; Landau, “Introduction: An Amazing Distance,” 1–40, and Landau, “Empires of the Visual: Photography and Colonial Administration in Africa,” 141–171, in Paul Landau and Deborah Kaspin, eds., *Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

¹¹⁹ Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 48, 66, 99, 104; and Andrew Bank, “Anthropology and Portrait Photography: Gustav Fritsch’s ‘Natives of South Africa,’ 1863–72,” *Kronos: Journal of Cape History*, 27 (*Special Issue: Visual History*, ed. Patricia Hayes and Andrew Bank) (November 2001), 43–76; Gustav Fritsch, *Drei Jahre in Süd-Afrika: Reiseskizzen nach Notizen des Tagebuchs zusammengestellt. Mit zahlreichen Illustrationen nach Photographien und Originalzeichnungen des Verfassers, nebst einer Übersichtskarte der ausgeführten Routen* (Breslau: Ferdinand Hirt, 1868); Fritsch, *Die Eingeborenen Süd-Afrika’s Ethnographisch und Anatomisch Beschrieben* (Breslau: Ferdinand Hirt, 1872); Fritsch, *Die Eingeborenen Süd-Afrika’s Atlas, Enthaltend*

somatized ideas of difference. Initially, he classified “Caffre” (working among the deposed chiefs imprisoned on Robben Island) as “A-Bantu,” redeploying the linguist William Bleek’s nonhierarchical designation to imply a finer type; he followed with a hodgepodge of tribes on the next tier: “Basutu, Bamantitisi, Barolong, Gamalete, Maaue, Bakhatla, Bakuena, Babidiji, Bawankets.” He discussed and described their habits loosely, almost haphazardly.

Then in 1872, with the publication of *Die Eingeborenen Süd-Afrika’s Ethnographisch und Anatomisch Beschrieben*, and his accompanying *Atlas*, Fritsch made a more serious effort to supply an exhaustive catalogue of highveld tribes, and his photography became more of a tool, like a caliper: exterior, material, and repeatable in its operation. In refining the use of the photograph, Fritsch supplied a tribalism that required a repeatable point of view, recording images of people at eye level, reduced in his *Atlas* to front-and-profile busts. His copper-engraved reproductions were a regimentation of the panoptical racial perspective held by settlers. Color-conscious travelers noted back in 1833 that “the Barolongs” were darker than “Korannas,” but that out of all “the Bechuana tribes,” they were not the darkest. In silver salts, and in published copper etchings, however, Fritsch’s “Barolong” and other “Bantu” were people with glossy dark skin.¹²⁰ Barolong were reckoned as tribal black Africans, different in appearance from métis or Coloured (Korana, Bushman, etc.) As “to see” came to stand for “to know,” that is how they became.

Subsequently in ethnographic photographs the camera was often positioned as if for comparative identification, too far away for a personal greeting, but too close for hailing the subject: an impossible or ordinarily transient distance. People were also often disposed in unrealistic ways. Greeting foreigners or visitors in life, young women would be among young women, married men with married men; the tableaux of photographs jarred against conventions. In portraits the individual was often isolated by fiat and looks at the camera as at something being done *to* him; he does not know what it is, only that he will not own the result. Wealthier patrons of the emerging “photographic saloons” in urban South Africa, of whatever race, represented themselves with bourgeois props, as persons bravely facing the world. But ethnographic photographs worked by representing persons as metonyms for a larger entity, a tribe or racial type.¹²¹

* * * * *

Dreissig Tafeln Racentyphen, Sechszig Portraits, von Vorn und von der Seite Aufgenommen Nach Original Photographien des Verfassers in Kupfer Radirt von Professor Hugo Büchner (Breslau: Ferdinand Hirt, 1872), Tafel XX.

¹²⁰ See Landau, “Empires of the Visual.”

¹²¹ Zimmerman, *Anthropology*, ch. 4, and Fritsch, *Die Eingeborenen*, and *Die Eingeborenen ... Atlas*, explored by Bank, “Anthropology,” and Hayes, “Introduction,” *Kronos*, 27 (November 2001), 3; cf. Carl Dammann, *Anthropologisch-Ethnologisches Album in Photographien von C. Dammann in Hamburg* (Berlin: Wiegand, Hempel, and Parey, 1873–4).

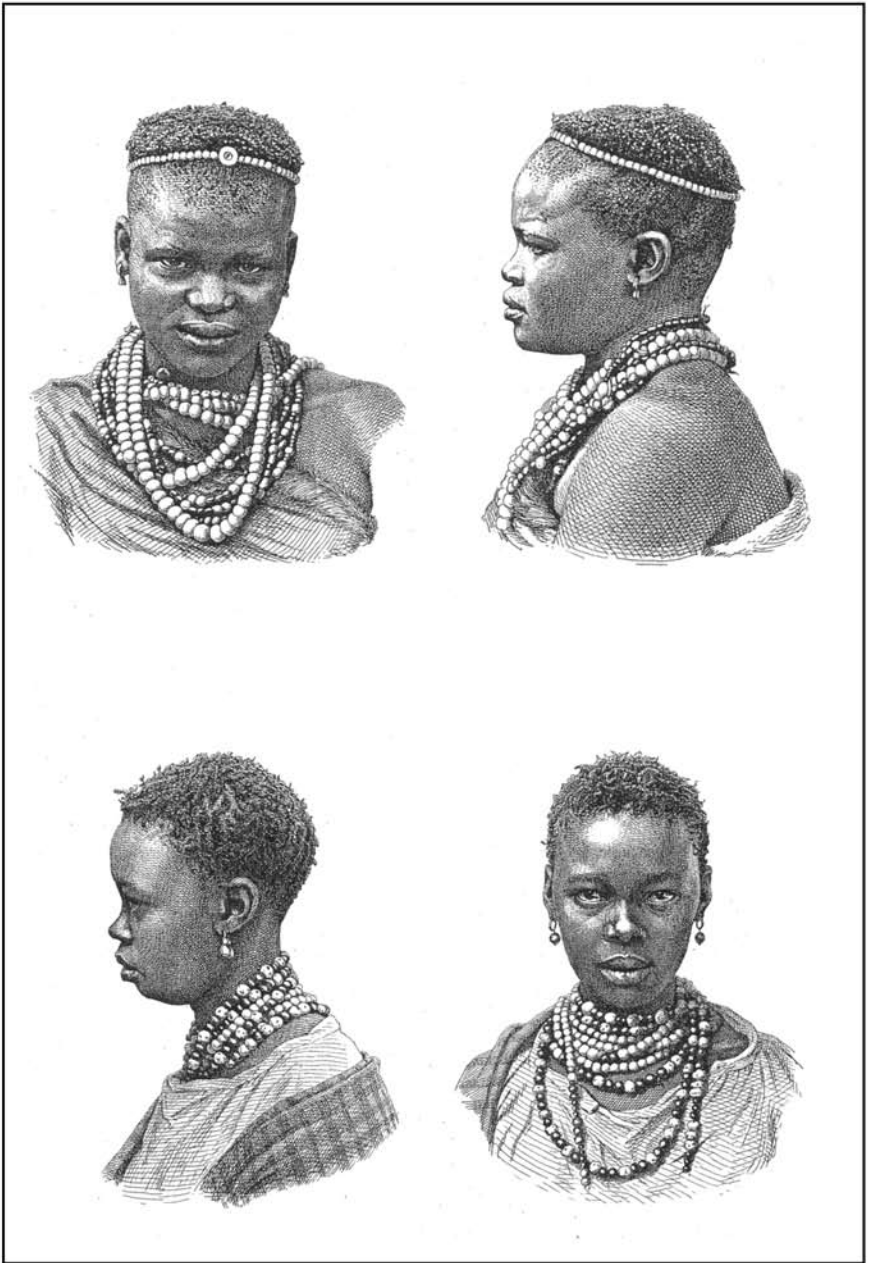


FIGURE 4.3. Gustav Fritsch, photograph; Hugo Büchner, copper engraving: Tafel XX: “Ba-kuéna, Barolong,” from *Die Eingeborenen Süd-Afrika’s Atlas*, 1872.

By the end of the 1870s, in short, it is not that highveld people were being *detrribalized* in missions and Boer farms, nor industrial work sites. They were *tribalized* in those places. Tribal allegiances were born denying the circumstances of their own generation and protesting their imminent demise. They were taken up by Africans suffering territorial conquest and enserfment, because they were what was left over.

Still, one must do more than recognize these trends from vignettes taken on the prowl. One must ask how, as the industrial era began in the late 1870s, highveld people themselves trafficked in tribal modes of identity. This requires a sustained gaze, directed at a given area and its politics. And so we return to Thaba Nchu and the domains of the people of Seleka.

CHRISTIANITY AND ETHNICITY, PART III: ANGLICANISM, SELEKA COURT POLITICS, AND SAMUEL MOROKA

Chief Moroka sent his sons to school in the Cape, where he hoped they would develop wider, relevant connections. Tshipinare and his half brother Richard went to Salem, in Grahamstown, under the Reverend William Shaw, while another son went to Lovedale in the Eastern Cape. Moroka's son Lefhulere, baptized Samuel (for Samuel Broadbent), attended Zonnebloem College, in Cape Town. There Samuel began to see himself not as "a Barolong" or a tribesman, but as a citizen of the British empire.

Of course, at Zonnebloem students were still natives, in Fanon's reflexive sense, and were tasked to discover themselves as such. Established in the 1860s, the "Kaffir College" gave content to Britain's cultivation of her Empire's chiefs. A schoolboy's essay from 1867 identifies its author as one of the "savages," a member of the "Kaffirs, Basutos, and other petty nations" attending Zonnebloem. The essayist submitted as part of his description of "Africa" a list of cities, all of which were, he noted, owned by "the Englishmen": Cape Town, Natal, Graham's Town, and "King William's Town"; Africa, despite its intemperate climate and other enumerated flaws, was "very attractive to the white people."¹²² If hegemony instills "contradictory consciousness" in subordinated subjects, this was its institutionalization.¹²³

The dream of becoming a citizen of the British Empire nonetheless seemed within reach to Samuel Moroka. He was confirmed as an Anglican in Cape Town, and polished his English, and implored the High Commissioner, Sir George Grey, to send him to school in England. Grey had casually suggested as much to Samuel years before, and his lordship finally followed up

¹²² From the periodical *The Net Cast in Many Waters* (London), May 1, 1867, "The Kafir College at the Cape," no author, 78.

¹²³ Janet K. H. Hodgson, "A History of Zonnebloem College, 1858–1870, a Study of Church and Society," 2 vols., M.A. Thesis, University of Cape Town, Religion, 1975, Vol. 2, 341, Vol. 1, 299–304.

in 1861.¹²⁴ Together with the grandsons of Moshoeshoe and several other major chiefs, Samuel sailed from Cape Town and enrolled at St. Augustine's, an Anglican college in Canterbury, England, to study for the ministry. It was subsequently assumed that Samuel would himself found an Anglican mission in Thaba Nchu, as a priest.

The senior Anglican in the Orange Free State, Edward Twells, the Bishop of Bloemfontein, had through subordinates already applied to Moroka's counselors to secure a plot of land to build a church in Thaba Nchu, and had been ignored. The Wesleyans said they had "founded" the town and owned all its land outright. Twells himself complained to Moroka that his requests were not getting a hearing. Did religion exist yet as a separate sphere under Moroka's rule? he asked. The Methodists "had set themselves to oppose the spread of the Gospel among the Heathen." Samuel made a steadfast friend in George Mitchell, a fellow student at St. Augustine's, and the two men together decided to bring Anglican worship to Thaba Nchu.¹²⁵ With his brother Morwagabuse, who was baptized "George" in George Mitchell's honor, Samuel decided the three of them would start to build a church before Moroka had a chance to decide one way or the other.

The Reverend Mitchell and the two brothers, Samuel and George, planned to establish a residential-ecclesiastical compound together, three structures, the germ of a separate ward. Two homes, with Samuel and George in one, and Mitchell in the other, formed the base of a triangle; a schoolroom-church was its apex, topped by the altar itself. Mitchell would educate their brides-to-be, and they would pray together there. For unknown reasons, the plan was not fulfilled. A series of reassignments twice interrupted the establishment of the church in any tangible form. When Samuel's home burned down mysteriously, however, he decided not to move to a new planned Christian compound, but to build again in his old yard – albeit this time with glass windows and a room divider, on which he hung pictures culled from English magazines.¹²⁶

Ultimately, Moroka allowed the Anglicans to construct a very robust church near the dilapidated Wesleyan one, which at that juncture lacked a roof.¹²⁷ Moroka's idea was to confine Anglicanism and Methodism to a single, court-oriented paradigm, and the pastors all understood as much. Notwithstanding his aims, however, several small chiefs, ward-leaders, built households adjacent to the Anglican church, on the rear of the property. They recapitulated aspects

¹²⁴ Lester, *Imperial*, 74; this and previous paragraph, W. L. and L. Rees, *The Life and Times of Sir George Grey* (London: Hutchinson, 1892), 313; WITS, Cullen Library, *Mission Field* (1/1/1860), AB 924; WITS, Occasional Papers, *The Net* (1/5/1867), 76 ff., St. Augustine's Occasional Papers, Vol. 58, 8/10/1861; Janet Hodgson, "A History of Zonnebloem," Vol. 1, 299; 265; Vol. 2, 406.

¹²⁵ WITS, Cullen Library, Province of South Africa, Diocese of the Orange River State, Register of Clergy, no. 5, George Mitchell, born July 18, 1835, confirmed 1854, ordained a deacon in 1864 for mission work in Thaba Nchu, orders given, 1869.

¹²⁶ USPG E 20, 1867–8, George Mitchell, St. Augustine's (Thaba Nchu) Report, 31/12/1865.

¹²⁷ USPG E 20, 1867–8, Mitchell, St. Augustine's (Thaba Nchu) Report, 30/6/1866.

of the Mitchell–Samuel Anglican settlement plan, overlapping supposedly different fealties, political and religious, in a single set-apart space. Among those joining the new neighborhood with their people by the church was Bogachu, the quasi-independent chief and language tutor, who had avoided the disaster of Viervoet and become estranged from Tshipinare. A Chief Lebetse headed a small Anglican *ba-rotse* ward.

Neither George nor Samuel attended Christian services reliably. Mitchell complained of their absences, and he “excommunicated” Samuel in June of 1867, most likely because he paid cattle to the family of his bride, Margaret; still, however, Samuel was reinstated as a full member before Easter. Mitchell continued to ask Samuel and George and their households to hold private services with him in a small “chapel” that had been used otherwise exclusively by visiting English Christians, and their families dined together on some Sundays. Over time Samuel’s fortunes in the Anglican congregation steadily improved.

To comprehend what sort of meaning multiracialism, or nonracialism, had for Samuel Moroka in the Anglican communion, one must register that Europeans – mostly Boers – often lived beyond the reach of any law. Violent, racist men found ways to remind Samuel and men such as he that they were *not* white. Boers twice terrorized chief Moroka, his father, at gunpoint, in 1843 and 1863, both occasions in which Moroka (a “non-Christian”) was trying to attend a Methodist-led prayer meeting.¹²⁸ Samuel was friendly with his neighbors, but he had been “mistreated ... by the Springfield Boers” when he was passing through their midst, on another occasion leading Brand to fine several men, suggesting that Samuel had been beaten. Standing at communion at Canterbury, receiving the body of Christ from the same hand as did Europeans, Samuel must have understood at once that he was flirting with danger – that the status he sought would be a provocative one back home.

Old chief Moroka asked all Christians to participate in public prayers and all of them to make rain. Mitchell obligingly belittled the efforts of “Kaffir rain-makers” and brought down a thundershower.¹²⁹ Joining Samuel, George, and Mitchell was a young man named William Crisp, sent as a pastor-in-training to Thaba Nchu directly after his confirmation and adult baptism at age twenty-five. The Reverend Crisp soon became one of Moroka’s favorites.

William Crisp’s first mentor, Canon H. F. Beckett of the Society for Propagating the Gospel, emphasized caution and probity in evangelism, and

¹²⁸ Or rather on one occasion on his way to prayers, and on another, at them. VAB Nuwe GS 1568 Native Affairs, Moroka: Moroka to Brand, 6/4/1865; 7/4/65; 2/6/65; Creswell (missionary) to Brand, 14/8/65; Moroka to Brand, 29/12/65; also cited in Wales, “The Relationship,” 216, 219, 223 (“I once restored to them a canon [*sic*], & do they now threaten to shoot me?”) VAB Nuwe GS 1568 Native Affairs, Moroka: Moroka to Joseph Allison, 19/6/1863; and for the earlier (1843) incident, see Shaw’s report to Secretary of State, in W. G. A. Mears, *Welseyan Baralong Mission*, 27–8; and Crisp Letterbook (WITS), Thaba Nchu, June 5, 1871.

¹²⁹ USPG E 20, 1867–8, Mitchell, St. Augustine’s (Thaba Nchu) Report, 30/6/1866, and Cory, WMMS S.A.corr., A. Priestley, 13/10/1873.

patience in following in the Methodist path. Addressing an early convocation of Anglican missionaries, the Canon's voice had echoed over the missionaries' bowed heads: "O God Who for them that renounce the world dost prepare a mansion in the Heavens, fill the earthly dwelling place of this Society with Heavenly blessing, and grant that thy servants, bound together by a brotherly bond of love, may live in continual *self restraint*."¹³⁰ These were words to live by. Perhaps the Canon was thinking about Bishop John William Colenso of Natal, "the heretic" whom the Bishop of Cape Town had excommunicated in 1863. Perhaps he was thinking of Bishop Twells, who would eventually be cashiered for having sex with young men in the Bloemfontein choir.¹³¹ In any case, Crisp did not make waves. Somewhat bewildered, knowing no Sechuana, Crisp in his thoughts often dwelt on the minutia of his family's situation, his father's debts and other kin's woes back in rural Worcester. For a long time he prayed without much comprehension, saying phrases by rote, hampered further by a "speech impediment."¹³²

For all these reasons, Moroka grew to prefer his benedictions and ceremonial intonations greatly.¹³³ Crisp became his master of ceremonies.

It was only in 1870, at the start of the season of Christianity's extended growth, with Mitchell returned from Kimberley, that Crisp's situation changed. Crisp went away to learn Sechuana with Bogachu, the same man who had hosted Robert Moffat upcountry in 1827 and taught him the language. Now in his sixties, Bogachu reentered the stream of translation again and led Crisp to proficiency in the same Christian lexicon he himself had helped pioneer.¹³⁴ One notes that confessional difference did not extend down to the roots. Indeed Samuel had taught Mitchell Sechuana by reading from Moffat's just-printed Bible, which Mitchell naturalized as incontestable.

When Bogachu and Crisp returned to Thaba Nchu, the priest began to find that when he preached to crowds they understood him.¹³⁵ Crisp gained

¹³⁰ WITS CPSA AB 2259/ Gar: Clergy: H. F. Beckett's Journal: full stop added, as the prayer in the original continues. USPG E 24: 1868–9, Mitchell, Modderpoort, 30/9/1869; speech impediment: USPG D 65: 1883, Crisp, Thaba Nchu, 25/10/1883 (my emphasis).

¹³¹ Jeff Guy, *The Heretic: A Study of the Life of John William Colenso, 1814–1883* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1983), 142. WITS CPSA AP 2259/ Fb1.4, Bishop Twells's Correspondence, 1863–9, Richard Giddy to Twells, Wittebergh, 28/12/1864; and draft Twells to Moroka, Bloemfontein, 26/9/1865; USPG D 38: 1867–71, Twells 16/8/1867; Charles Clulee, Report to [U]SPG from quarter ending in September 1869; and Southey, "Uncovering Homosexuality," esp. 54. The homily is intended as a typical one; cf. Bishop's Address, "pure and holy life," August 17, 1871, *Bloemfontein Diocesan Magazine*, Vol. 1, in CPSA AB 2259/ Gd1.2 W. Crisp, Log book, encl. in SAMPE Vol. 1, Corresp., and Vol. 2, 1873–.

¹³² USPG D 65: 1883, Crisp, Thaba Nchu, 25/10/1883.

¹³³ WITS, Province of South Africa, Diocese of the Orange River State Register of Clergy, no. 13, William Crisp, ordained 1872, served also with W. H. R. Bevan, a third missionary who arrived around 1871.

¹³⁴ USPG E 27: 1872, Mitchell, Thaba Nchu, 31/3/1872; Mitchell, "Some Account of the Barolong – A South African Tribe," Part I, *Mission Field* (August 2, 1875), 236. My examination of birth registers and other parish sources suggests this is a single man, Bogachu, in 1827 and in the 1860s–1880s; he would have been eighty in about 1885.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

enough confidence that he began to travel, and he used a hand press to print his own catechisms and hymns. Eventually, in 1894, he produced an undernoticed New Testament of his own devising. Crisp's approach to translation, and his later ethnographic-style treatment of the highveld, placed South Africans in a shared, universal biblical history. Relating the story of Solomon's judgment in an 1871 publication called *The Bechuana*, for a proposed catechism, Crisp wrote, "Behold, Barolong ... the speech of Solomon and Sechuana were one." Sechuana-speakers were urged to look to the past. The teacher was to say to the student in Sechuana, "Barolong long ago knew Ancestor [*Modimo*] truly, but they forgot Him. Thus you must not say the teachers wish to destroy the customs of old [*bogologolo*]. That's not so. Their learning is not new; it is of greatness [*eone e khologolo*], and our people once knew it. It came from Ancestor, the Great One [*mogologolo*]." ¹³⁶

Father Crisp thus began to minister effectively for the first time working in Moffat's protean, indigenized vocabulary, with A/ancestor. He worked alongside the "native evangelists" trained at Bloemfontein, and the local Anglicans, now including Bogachu. He reached more and more villages in his itinerations. At the same time, he, Mitchell, and the schoolteacher Bevan elevated Samuel to the highest, singular, Anglican lay position, "Church Warden," at the end of 1878. Samuel's cause and the Anglican congregation, both, tended to attract chiefs and lords of royal extraction whose ancestors had settled with Moroka in the past century. ¹³⁷ The Samuelite Anglicans thus came to pose a threat from within the established order. Moroka berated them: they were supposed to preach by the chief's side, in the center of town, not on faraway farms he seldom visited; they were to join in the court prayers the Wesleyans led, "the Chief's Service," which was to be considered nondenominational.

It was difficult to check Anglican ambitions, however, as Moroka did not wish to attack the Church of England directly. He appointed Tshipinare Tlala, his oldest (and adopted) son, a Methodist church member, to rule in his name for the final two years of his life, as his father Sefunelo previously had appointed him. And Moroka made it clear, to those who paid attention, that he wished Tshipinare to continue ruling after he was gone. Within the diminished house of Seleka two claimants thenceforth waited to contest the succession: Tshipinare Tlala and Samuel (Lefhulere) Moroka. There was not on the face of it much to contest: all the chiefship had left was the piece of

¹³⁶ WITS AB 2259/ Gd.1.1 Vol. 1, doc. "buka," "Ma-Ngoana ke eo choarang thipa," 22, my translation. William Crisp, *The Bechuana of South Africa* (London: SPCK, 1896). Also CPSA AB 2259/ Gd 1.2 W. Crisp, 1873 – i.e., Thursday 2 October 1871. In 1876 Crisp moved to Phokoane (Phokwane) under chief Bothasitse and retreated to Barkly West, and then to the Theology College; he issued his N.T. translation with a "native assistant" under the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, *Testamente e ncha ea Morena oa rona le 'moloki Yesu Kreste* (London: SPCK, 1894).

¹³⁷ This does not mean that all the Anglicans supported Samuel over Tshipinare or that the Methodists supported Tshipinare. Wales, "The Relationship," esp. 259, citing WITS CPSA, Crisp, Letters ("Log Book"), Crisp to his mother, August 13, 1868; Bogachu had kin in the membership of the Methodist church (St. Paul's, Thaba Nchu, baptismal register, 1874).

land tenuously recognized by Warden, bitten at the edges by encroaching Boer farms. Inside it, Moroka's authority was ever more "customary."

Still, Tshipinare had taken pains to ensure that he had a strong hand in battling Samuel for the chiefship. He had visited the home of his senior "brother" and the erstwhile heir, Sefunelo, after the latter was killed at Viervoet; he fathered a child with his widow, "raising up seed for" Sefunelo. The result was Motlhwane, the official heir of the next generation, blocking the path of the Samuelites. Tshipinare further arranged a marriage between adolescent Motlhwane and one of his daughters, Majang.¹³⁸ The Anglicans, asked to perform the ceremony, demurred because it looked incestuous to them, and Moroka and a Wesleyan "class leader" had to officiate. If Motlhwane ruled in name, Tshipinare, his biological father, would remain in power. But then Motlhwane fell off a horse and died, in 1879, leaving Tshipinare without such cover.

So Tshipinare planned to control the chiefship by reducing the numbers of "Barolong" who could claim to have permanent occupancy rights on the land. He withdrew recognition from recent adjuncts and racialized his base. His Barolong would then accord more closely with the tribal ideal, a generic entity which expelled "Koranners" (*korana*) and Bushman as *not* Barolong. He also ejected the crocodile-ranked households, whom the Methodists undertook to lead to a new tribal home.¹³⁹ He prepared to enter the Free State's wider legal system, by creating a permanent, paternalist, landlord class of subchiefs. He allocated land in freehold to white settler allies with this same purpose. Tshipinare wished to register his tribe and its rights within the larger, encroaching, system of private land and labor.

Moroka died on 8 April 1880, and called out to Jesus Christ, converting to Christianity with his dying breath, or so it was said. On 13 April, a meeting of Moroka's counselors, comprising "only Barolong, no other nations" (*naties*), proclaimed Tshipinare "chief of the Barolong."¹⁴⁰ The construction of this title was by then crucial. Well might many men oppose Tshipinare's seniority as chief; his land "reforms" were highly unpopular with ordinary people. He had a more solid claim to rule the notables of the Barolong tribe, at least of those admitted by *him* as Barolong.

President Brand of the Orange Free State had got into the habit of writing to Tshipinare as de facto chief. He eventually learned of Tshipinare's unpopularity and he was troubled. He counseled Tshipinare to defuse the situation by dividing the land further and letting each individual married man have a plot of his own. The chief should allow them to vote and elect a responsible body on the basis of these property rights. But Tshipinare demurred. He wanted to preserve something of the peasant economy, which relied on wider residential connections and on more land in rotation than such subdivisions could support. He wanted to preserve relationships undergirding his chiefship,

¹³⁸ USPG E 34 1879 Mitchell Thaba Nchu 1/1/1879; Murray, *Black Mountain*, 22.

¹³⁹ At a farm called Uitkyk near Ventersdorp; Murray, *Black Mountain*, 17.

¹⁴⁰ Wales, "The Relationship," 269 ff.

including its basic agrarian foundations. Therefore he wanted property laws for large tracts. Brand wanted homesteaders, private household farms. He also required that Tshipinare repudiate immediately Moroka's treaty of mutual aid and extradition with the Free State, and renounce any remaining purported right to retain subjects by force.¹⁴¹

Yet Brand was not serious about instituting a popular government in Thaba Nchu. Democracy was fine in principle, but when Samuel's partisans demanded a mass meeting (or *pitso*) to contest Tshipinare's rule, Brand supported Tshipinare's use of violence to stop them. Brand could not help noting that adherents of Samuel included not only gadflies and competitive factions but also "a very numerous following of old and influential Barolongs" (contrary to partisan reports), with unchallenged local roots. White policemen in Tshipinare's employ, with arms drawn, blocked them from entering and meeting in the Seleka-place court.¹⁴²

Brand sent word for everyone to stand down, and he dispatched a force to wait for instructions at the Modder River border of Thaba Nchu. It was apparent that Samuel had the support of the majority for his succession. Brand wrote to Samuel, "We cannot see you kindling a fire which may cause a great conflagration, without bestirring ourselves ... [to] extinguish it."¹⁴³ He made it absolutely clear that should violence erupt in Thaba Nchu, he personally would extinguish Thaba Nchu's autonomy. Common access to the land would then become a memory. Samuel understood this and made an offer to compromise, to divide the town into twin courts, one his and one Tshipinare's, a respectable highveld solution as we have seen. Brand forbade this, and gave Samuel a formal letter to sign, pledging to accept the Free State's intervention.

Samuel next asked that the judges for any arbitration over the chiefship in Thaba Nchu include four or five chiefs of the wider Caledon River Valley. Many of these men were by then classed as "Basuto." All of them were representatives of networked highveld power.¹⁴⁴

Brand refused to have them empaneled. He would come and decide things personally. The signatures of the prominent men of the Thaba Nchu court were "secured" in advance of the visit: Richard (Tshabadira), George, Samuel, Koko, and John, all, with Sepinaar/Tshipinare, signing "Moroka" as their surname – and "Bogatchou" (Bogachu), signing only with an X. We are fortunate to have a handwritten transcript of these hearings, which reveal the

¹⁴¹ Again contra Wales, "The Relationship," 264–5, here (re the undated footnote 15 on 256).

¹⁴² All these readings derive from the Orange Free State (Bloemfontein) Archives (VAB), GS 1517, "President's Letterbook" (Brievenboek, Staats President), 1878–81.

¹⁴³ Brand struck "bestirring," and wrote "Without making an effort to extinguish it," VAB, GS 1517, "President's Letterbook," 1878–81, Brand to Samuel, Bloemfontein, 1 June 1880.

¹⁴⁴ Samuel wanted Moruba, Moswete (of the Rapulana house), "Mashowe," David Masupha, and Letsie, to arbitrate the succession – the latter two Moshoeshoe tried to designate as dual heirs before he died; Wales, "The Relationship," 270; Thompson, *Survival*, 181.

grassroots interplay of highveld politics, ethnicity, and colonial rule at the close of the era of African chiefly independence.

CHIEFSHIP AND TRIBAL BIOLOGY ON TRIAL

Brand heard statements made by Barolong in Thaba Nchu, first under the rubric of “mediation,” from 8–17 June, then, in a virtual continuance of the earlier proceedings, a month later, in a week of further “arbitration,” before he announced for Tshipinare. The thoroughness of the undertaking suggests that his verdict was not entirely foreordained. The hearings were amalgams of ordinary court (*kgotla*) practice, with the principals questioning witnesses, and the formality of a proceeding before a colonial magistrate’s bench. Even before the start of the hearings, everyone agreed that the eldest living son of Moroka’s senior-ranked wife, Moilana, had been Sefunelo (II), named after Moroka’s father – before the young man died broken on the rocks below Viervoet’s cliffs; and that his “son,” Motlhwane, would have inherited the chiefship were he not also dead. Samuel argued that, in the wake of these deaths, Sefunelo’s (1851) and Motlhwane’s (1879) and now, chief Moroka’s (1880), he, Samuel, was the next proximate heir.

Why had he bided his time while Tshipinare stepped in as “acting chief” during Moroka’s years of infirmity (Brand wished to know)? Samuel implied that his deference was generational: Sefunelo and Tshipinare had been circumcised together and ranked together, without Samuel among them. They were partners, in other words, in a functioning alliance. Now that Moroka was dead and the actual succession for the people of Seleka hung between age cohorts, Samuel put forward his claim.¹⁴⁵

Tshipinare, when it was his turn to testify, said immediately, “Samuel is not a Barolong but a Korana.”¹⁴⁶ This would be the alpha and omega of his and his partisans’ argument: race. Tshipinare’s gambit was to claim biology as central, from his own “raising of seed” to others’ similar zygotic paternity, and to see ideological affinities as mystifications.¹⁴⁷ According to Tshipinare, Samuel could not be Moroka’s blood and could not inherit. He had been concealing his true identity: he was a fraud; he should be run out of town.

Among Samuel’s parade of friendly witnesses, however, the matter of zygotic paternity was not immediately taken up. At first, people focused on known facts, on Samuel’s mother’s status as one of Moroka’s wives, and Samuel’s acceptance, in Moroka’s own yard, as Sefunelo (II)’s and Tshipinare’s younger brother. For even if Tshipinare’s biological claims prevailed, Tshipinare was – also – not Moroka’s biological son. Women in their testimony tended to defend

¹⁴⁵ Recall that full brothers were not circumcised together; and VAB GS 1571 (Moroka 1884), “Bemiddeling over het Opperhosfdshap der Barolong te Thaba Nchu,” 90, “Ik was nog yong toen mijn vader aan Sepinare de regeringschap gegeven neeft,” for instance, Gonnntse’s testimony.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., “... maar een Koranner is,” 91.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 80 and 135.

the jural status of *all* the children in the household as siblings, by default, regardless of their birth. Tshipinare's partisans, who in contrast were all men, had a less inclusive view and said that Samuel's mother, Moilana, was estranged from Moroka before Samuel's birth, ruling the chief out as the father. The grandmother and midwife who delivered Samuel, a sister of Moilana, rebutted them: she said all Moilana's children were Moroka's. One of Samuel's two sisters, Tsai, recalled that Tshipinare and Sefunelo were like "twins" growing up in the same yard and bemoaned the problem of fighting between "the children of the *stadt*." But then Tsai unexpectedly asked that she herself be chief:

I see that you want to have the estate (*de erven*) but it belongs to me, too, and that is why I want it. I see that you want to make it your own, but I want it. We are Barolongs – the brothers would have more rights to get the estate than sisters, it is true – but that result would not be proper here. ... [To Samuel and Tshipinare:] You are both brothers – I loved you both like Moroka.¹⁴⁸

As we have seen for the early part of the nineteenth century, there were indeed precedents for a woman to become chief in this situation, in history and in lore, following the paradigmatic "Mohurutshe" (person-of-*ha-rotse*). Our "Barolong" practice, Tsai said, did not feature concrete rules; in this case, she, as a royal woman, would be quite appropriate as chief.

Tshipinare had already exiled recent Barolong joiners under Moroka or had made life uncomfortable for their chiefs. It was left to Tshipinare's senior, male partisans to drive home the narrow racial argument. In particular, seventy-plus-year-old David Ngakantsi delivered testimony against Samuel. A long-time Christian, Ngakantsi had himself accompanied James Archbell to scout out the "Middle" River Valley nearly half a century before. Some of the younger Ngakantsis, especially David's son, Jacob, had rejected the political status quo in the past decade and left town. But David Ngakantsi had not, and he knew *rolong*-order politics inside and out, just as he was versed in the ways of the wider world.

David Ngakantsi began by testifying that Moroka had declared his intention to hand the chiefship to Tshipinare. Many of those present before Brand, including "three white men," witnessed Moroka designate Tshipinare his heir: "Moroka was talking about the land, the people (*volk*), and the governance (*regering*), and ... all the children of the chiefship (*stadt*)," Ngakantsi recalled. Less apparent was how much weight that carried. So when Ngakantsi came to the matter of Samuel's paternity, he spoke in explicit terms. After Tshipinare as a boy and his mother Nkhabele came to live with Moroka, Ngakantsi said, Moroka's existing, senior wife, Moilana, left the household, and Moroka no longer "went into her hut" (*scherms*). Ngakantsi also made reference to conception (*verwekken*) and sex (*gemeenschap*) in Sechuana and most likely in Dutch.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., Tsai's testimony, 123.

¹⁴⁹ Testimony was also solicited as to whether Moroka slaughtered "as usual" on the birth of Moilana's sons, to see whether he viewed them as "his." This point did not itself carry the day.

You are familiar with the idea that siblings can have more than one father? ... Sefunelo [II] was conceived [*verwekt*] by Matlabi.... Moroka raised the child as his own – and when Matlabi was finally through tarrying in the house of Moroka, he sent a black bullock to acknowledge his actions; he sent it to Moroka. The next day, Matlabi was with Moroka to receive the skin. The child was his. Subsequently a Korana with the name Nxai also came into Moroka's house. He wanted to clear this thing up, too, and he sent Moroka a bullock to slaughter. But Moroka sent it on to Matlabi, because Moroka called Matlabi his father. Matlabi rejected the skin, saying, no, Nxai was only a servant, his actions were of no consequence!!¹⁵⁰

These were extravagant insults. Ngakantsi said not only was Samuel a bastard, but Samuel's elder brother, who legitimated the current chiefly line, was also a bastard. He finished by claiming that Moroka had ordered Samuel out of town with the words, "You are not my child and are the child of a Bushman and a Korana," adding, "If I were his real son, I would respect his decision."¹⁵¹

Now, one cannot rule out the possibility that Ngakantsi was narrowly correct, and moreover that Chief Moroka had imbibed a racialized sense of Barolong and wished Samuel kept out of the chiefship for similar reasons; some observers thought so. There is some evidence for it. Moroka's son Morwagabuse (George) was named "The bushman doesn't rule," which may have been, according to the historian S. M. Molema, a message about Samuel. Such an aphorism, indicating the well-known *ur*-oral tradition set among pre-codified people of *Ffokeng* discussed in Chapter 2, may also not have been aimed at Samuel at all.

At the hearings, Samuel acted as his own counsel. He kept to the framework implied by the emphasis on inheritance practices, not the exchange of genetic material. Brand's thinking, the target of both sides' strategies, can be gleaned by noting that his court reporter translated the matter of the inheritance of the chiefship as concerning the "estate" (*erfenis*). The chiefship was taken as equivalent to property. Samuel accepted the "estate" idiom, but focused on cattle, querying Ngakantsi in his cross examination as to common inheritance practice. With Moroka dead, would he, Samuel Moroka, inherit cattle in his mother Moilana's house, once the heirs Sefunelo and Motlhwane had been buried? Ngakantsi would not play along. With a keen grasp of accepted highveld norms as well as the Boers' rules for passing down estates, he parried Samuel's argument. Samuel, he said, would have had to have to divide any beasts with Tsai, his sister, and he would only get them if he continued to live, effectively, "in Tsai's hut."

Samuel tried another tactic. He questioned old David Goronyane, a Christian and a Tshipinare partisan – the man who later became the effective chief of a much attenuated Thaba Nchu "native reserve".

SAMUEL: Who was Moroka's oldest brother?
 DAVID GORONYANE: Chake. [Recall Chake *died at Viervoet*.]

¹⁵⁰ "Bemiddeling," 134.

¹⁵¹ Wednesday, 9 June testimony.

- SAMUEL: Does his eldest brother [Chake] not have a son?
 DAVID GORONYANE: Yes.
 SAMUEL: What is his name?
 DAVID GORONYANE: [Apparent pause] Adam.
 SAMUEL: Is he not the son of Molale's oldest brother? [i.e., Chake?]
 DAVID GORONYANE: [Apparently reluctantly] ... Yes, so far as I know.
 SAMUEL: Doesn't he have higher stature than Molale?
 DAVID GORONYANE: Yes, at least I believe that's the way it is.

Why would Samuel ask about another line of inheritance, Chake's, unless the implication redounded to Tshipinare's discredit? Unless, in other words, Chake, Moroka's eldest brother, senior to him in years, killed thirty years before, had a "son" Adam not yet thirty – thus born of a seed "raised up" helpfully by a kinsman. Samuel's mention of Molale in this context (and not, say, chief Moroka, Molale's and Chake's brother), suggests that Molale was that kinsman. Just as Molale would not be chief, or senior to Adam Chake because of this paternity, nor should Tshipinare, just for "raising up" seed for an heir.

Several Chake-surnamed children, cousins, and grandchildren were presumably listening to the testimony at that moment. Most of them had entered the Anglican communion with the grand confirmations of the 1870s. They had grown successful and increased their consumption of items from the European-owned stores. In fact, the intended audience was this very cohort, progressive, Christian, coming of age at the time, their households scarred by war. Getting Goronyane to admit that Adam and others like him were sons of their namesake fathers was precisely the point. For if Adam Chake was not a bastard, then Samuel wasn't, either.

True, Goronyane cleverly added, before Samuel could go any further: "As it is with Tshipinare. Moroka has always said [Tshipinare,] you are my older brother's son, and the chiefship is yours." In other words, if zygotic paternity was not everything, Tshipinare, Tlala Tawana's son, could also inherit Moroka's chiefship. But Samuel had scored a crucial point. Many a younger brother had acted to "raise up seed" among the women widowed by the "Basuto Wars." Was Tshipinare going to unmask their offspring as impostors, too? The audience had some time to reflect on their own family histories that June winter, in the time between the first and second hearings. Did fathers and elder brothers die so Tshipinare could take the land for pure-blood lineages?

The political argument trended toward Samuel even if the biological one worked for Tshipinare. It seemed quite possible that someone other than Moroka contributed his haploid genome to Samuel, but few were sure how significant that datum was. After all, neither Tshipinare nor Samuel had proper biological sons.¹⁵² Tshipinare was not very confident. When he was

¹⁵² Samuel's wife bore a son (named Sefunelo) who died after a few weeks in 1871; another baby, Helena, died in 1874. After Samuel's remarriage the Anglicans subsequently baptized three sons as Nicolas, John, and Job, who apparently all died, probably in 1875, 1877, and for Job, 14/8/1880. Molema, *Chief Moroka*, appendix, gives "zero" as the number of sons Samuel left behind.

interrogating Bogachu, he cut Bogachu short and accused him (and Moroka's brother Molale!) of disloyalty and of conspiring to kill chief Moroka, and so, of having nothing further to say:

- TSHIPINARE: Did you go away from Moroka –
 BOGACHU: I have trekked to here –
 TSHIPINARE: Did you not take a gun and threaten Moroka, while
 I was there –
 BOGACHU: I did not do that.
 TSHIPINARE: You have never said to Moroka, “You know what it feels
 like to die?”
 BOGACHU: No.
 TSHIPINARE: You have never taken a group of people, like we have today, and
 trekked –
 BOGACHU: I did trek and took about thirty people [i.e., men] when
 everyone was making their way to Major Warden's war with
 Moletsane at Viervoet, and I made my way up over the Vaal
 River.
 TSHIPINARE: ... why? ...
 BOGACHU: Ask your Basuto.¹⁵³

Eventually, greater numbers of witnesses addressed themselves to the question of whether Moroka and Moilana were still “married” at Samuel's birth, but rejoinders like Bogachu's continued to pepper the testimonies. One man who spoke on Samuel's behalf had gone blind after Viervoet, a delayed reaction to being struck in the head with a rock. He was asked whether this motivated his words against Tshipinare, and he said no, he only wanted to stop Thaba Nchu from not existing.¹⁵⁴ When the questions returned to the conjugal relations of Moroka and Samuel's mother, it was Chief Montshiwa, visiting from his troubled Barolong dominion in the north, who made the strongest point for the Samuelites. He spoke only briefly, for what he had to say was only too obvious. Look for the cattle.

Transferred cattle make the case [Moilana and Moroka, Samuel's parents] were married. I was there when the beasts were given for MmaTau [Moilana]. We took them to Seiphemo [her brother, a Christian headman of some standing]. And for Seiphemo's mother, beasts were also paid. For Richard, and for George [other royals], beasts were paid for children conceived by [their wives]. When Tshipinare's father married [his wife], he paid cattle too, didn't he?¹⁵⁵

“Bogadi is a payment of the marriage,” as old Matlabi, named by Ngakantsi as a wolf, put it.¹⁵⁶ Such evidence was considered “conclusive” (*afdoening*

¹⁵³ i.e., Ask the fighters who slaughtered your men.

¹⁵⁴ “Bemiddeling,” Maholokeen, by Tshipinare, 162: “nog moet blij ven bestaan.”

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 174. Montshiwa or Montshioa ruled his people-of-*rolong* chiefdom from 1850 to 1896. See S. M. Molema, *Montshiwa, 1815–1896* (Cape Town: Struik, 1966).

¹⁵⁶ This Matlare or Matlari may be Matlabi, rebutting Ngakantsi's testimony about him, it is hard to be sure from the notes.

bewijzen) when applied to paternity cases. “By giving up the animals he proves that the children belonged to him.” This was the standard use of “proved” in their peasant society. In contrast, Tshipinare the modernizer suggested that status-keeping arrangements between households up to the level of chief be overthrown entirely, in favor of blood prerogatives in “Barolong.”

On 17 July 1880, President Brand ruled that Samuel was “not the son of Moroka.”¹⁵⁷ This was his judgment. Samuel was “a Koranner,” his yellow-complexion giving him away; he was not a Barolong at all. For Brand as for South Africa’s arbiters of the future, the true Barolong were a dark-skinned people – like Tshipinare, like the engravings reproducing the photographs taken by Gustavus Fritsch. Barolong were all related to one another through sharing the same blood.¹⁵⁸ This way of thinking reversed the earlier logic, the mixing, twin-court discourse of highveld politics. The oldest people-of-rolong lineages often produced people very *light* in complexion, because they were the most infused by Khoe-speakers’ ancestries, as we have seen.¹⁵⁹ The most crowded, central wards in a prestige-place association town were not pure; they were often the *most* heterogeneous in origin. Only, according to the racial view, Samuel was the *least* Barolong.

Within Thaba Nchu, the “Country of Moroka,” as a whole, one discerned no longer a layering of wards, but “Barolong, ... Basutos, a few families; Fingos, one or two hundred.”¹⁶⁰ Such a view ran absolutely counter to the one chiefs historically had embraced and that Samuel crafted in his Anglicanism and his various alliances. Intrinsic to the tribe as it emerged as a stable idea by the 1880s was the centrality of an imagined single affiliation with recent, inauthentic add-ons set aside. For perspective on this shift, think of Moroka’s maiden speech in 1833, in which he assailed being Korana and yet welcomed erstwhile Korana and other newcomers into his chiefdom. In 1880 the tribal model excluded them and other métis people of color. The tribe was thus racialized in Thaba Nchu when the people of Seleka no longer ruled their own affairs, on old Moshoeshoe’s phosphate-rich lands.

¹⁵⁷ VAB, before GS 1517, Brievenboek, Staats president, “I gave my award on the 16th in favour of Sepinare.”

¹⁵⁸ This is Janet Wale’s understanding, i.e., “Relationships,” 268. Anthony Trollope, *South Africa* (reprint of 1878 ed. with an introduction and notes by J. H. Davidson) (Cape Town: Balkema, 1973), 418–19, described Tshipinare as “dressed like a European, with a watch and chain at his waistcoat, a round flat topped hat, and cord trowsers, and was quite clean. Looking at him as he walks no one would believe him to be other than a white man.” Unless one looked more closely, in other words.

¹⁵⁹ O. O. Segopolo and other men remarked that a few royal Barolong with the purest Barolong ancestry look “like Arabs,” Oral Interviews, Moroka Siding, northeast Botswana, 3/2/98.

¹⁶⁰ George Mitchell, Thaba Nchu, St. Augustine, report, 31/12/1865, wrongly filed (see date) under USPG E 20 1867–8.

Mixed People (The Samuelites, the Griqua, and other subjectivities, 1880–1928)

President Brand's decision to award the chief's court to Tshipinare did not resolve the crisis at Thaba Nchu.¹ It did, however, give Tshipinare time to legalize his control of land in terms of Orange Free State law. In fact, he set in motion a strategic program to secure his chiefdom under white colonial authority.² He would create an aristocracy of patriarchs to own land, replacing all other political formations; and he would try to prevent his landlords from reselling their farms to outsiders.

Meanwhile the Reverend John Daniel complained darkly of a popular movement against this transformation. He pointed to "some dissatisfied and designing men" who were trying to "raise a rebellion in the country," and said the "rebels" included "more than half of our [Methodist Church] members."³ Adopting an unusual tone, Daniel wrote that "the numerical superiority of the rebels threatened for a time to [crush all] opposition & revolutionize the country."⁴ The

¹ Even after the resettling of so many wards under Tshipinare's regency, and the dispersals of the 1870s, and the Gun War, there were still enough Samuelites remaining to create "ill-feeling" between "two ... camps," in the congregations; if so, the vast majority of the people in Thaba Nchu must have opposed Tshipinare. Grahamstown, Cory Library (Cory), WMMS S.A. corr., J. Daniel, "Report of the Thaba Nchu Circuit, 1880–1," 102–4, hereafter Daniel, "Report", and also Janet Wales, "The Relationship between the Orange Free State and the Rolong of Thaba 'Nchu during the Presidency of J. H. Brand, 1864–1888." M.A. Thesis, Rhodes University, 1979, published as part 2 of *Archives Year Book for South African History* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1985), 297.

² 9 July 1880, in the *Friend of the Free State* (VAB); cf. Martin Chanock, *The Making of South African Legal Culture, 1902–1936: Fear, Favour, and Prejudice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 250.

³ Cory, Daniel, "Report." See Colin Murray, *Black Mountain: Land, Class and Power in the Eastern Orange Free State, 1880s–1890s*. (Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand Press, 1992), for such figures, with a different emphasis, 26. I intend my analysis inter alia to supersede that in R. L. Watson's useful articles, "The Subjection of a South African State: Thaba Nchu, 1880–1884," *Journal of African History*, 21 (1980), 357–73, and "Missionary Influence in Thaba Nchu, 1833–54: A Reassessment," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 10, 3 (1977), 394–407.

⁴ Cory, "Report," and USPG, D 65 1883, Synod, Diocese of Bloemfontein, Memorial, 5th session, William Crisp: "the exodus of one half of the Christians in communion with the

nature of the country was changing; free movement was a memory. A nonethnic and nontribal alliance was formed in this context under the leadership of Samuel Moroka in Thaba Nchu. The Samuelites stood against the forces of European and African landlordism fronted by Tshipinare.

Nonetheless, Samuel first rode to Bloemfontein with Father Crisp to see President Johannes Brand and beg him to change his mind and install him as chief. Brand was out of town, and Samuel was shown no special treatment. Instead, while he was waiting for Crisp outside a mission office, he was arrested for loitering: a black man without a pass. He posted his fine with a judge the next morning and left.⁵

On 27 August, Tshipinare provoked a confrontation with Samuel by sending hired European constables to interrupt a Methodist funeral and arrest several Samuelites, including the father of the child being buried. Five people were killed in the fracas, presumably by the policemen. Taking advantage of the sympathies of the crowd, Samuel and Bogachu then gathered 300 or 400 armed men in Bogachu's court by the Anglican church, and ran sorties against Tshipinare's close supporters. As the evening progressed, Samuel and his men were driven from the town, and suffered thirty further casualties in circumstances that remain obscure.⁶ Tshipinare survived the fighting.

After some days, the Samuelites established themselves at Soutpan, just north of Bloemfontein, in trying circumstances. From that post Samuel solicited and received the endorsements of surviving chiefs on the highveld, especially Moshoeshoe's descendents. They were aghast at what had befallen their independent neighbor, the Seleka chiefship; at the time, the prime minister of the Cape was spearheading an unsuccessful effort to disarm Lesotho. Samuel traveled to Cape Town, booked passage across the Atlantic Ocean, and brought his case to the imperial bureaucracy. He argued before the fifteenth Earl of Derby, Lord Stanley, the new Colonial Secretary for the Gladstone government, and the Archbishop of the Church of England. Although he impressed his audiences as a wrongly deposed prince, no European authority would espouse him as a protected ruler, another Khama or Moshoeshoe. Thus the members of the Aborigines' Protection Society, who praised Samuel's education at Canterbury and said that "the Boers have allowed ... Sepinare [Tshipinare] to usurp" him, advised him to declare himself "a loyal subject of the Free State" anyway – not just a minion of the Queen, which was only to be expected.⁷

[Anglican] Church." Three hundred fifty or so Methodists disappeared or stopped attending classes right after Samuel's banishment. Among the Samuelites were five Wesleyan assistant ministers and fifteen of their "class leaders." A "large portion of the Tribe" had left the town for parts unknown.

⁵ VAB, "The Settlement of the Barolong Succession Dispute," *Friend of the Free State*, 5 August 1880.

⁶ Wales, "Relationships," 275; USPG, E 35 1880, Mitchell, 30/9/1880. There is a blank spot in the record in understanding the role of the armed white policemen in these clashes and killings.

⁷ KAB, GH 1/429 Government House dispatches no. 7 (Derby) to Downing St., 14/1/1884. Newspapers: British Newspaper Database: "The Cape Mail," *Aberdeen Weekly Journal*,

Back home, armed with the sworn statements of several chiefs, Samuel announced that he would install his chiefship by force. The *Volksraad* or Free State parliament received several interventions to this effect. In the spring of 1882, a collection of chiefs sent a genealogical table and “certificate” attested by Moshoele (or Moshette, or Moswete) of Khunwane and by chief Montshiwa among others showing that Seleka was Tau’s second son and that “Samuel Lehlere Moroka is the Son of the (late) Chief Moroka.”⁸ After these formal declamations, there was a Basuto threat:

Sirs: I [am] humbly sending you a copy of a certificate which comes from Chief Moshesh’s sons. The words are as follows. – We the undersigned Lesia Moshesh, and Masupha Moshesh. Chiefs of the Basutos. Do hereby certify as follows, We are sons of the late paramount Chief of the Basutos Moshesh, and we were present at the granting, by Moshesh to the late Barolong chief Moroka of the territory now occupied as Moroka’s territory, which grant was given under the special Condition, that the chieftainship of the same, should forever remain in [the] tribe of Seleka the second son of Tau [*sic*] ... [and that Tshipinare, by] becoming a Chief through a lie, has made himself amenable by Bechuana laws, to be killed.⁹

To be killed. Thus the “certificate” was a death certificate.

AMENABLE ... TO BE KILLED

From 1880 to 1884, Tshipinare tried to run a colonial-style “native administration” staffed by white officials, including a magistrate, an administrator, and a sheriff with deputies. He retained an attorney, too. It was difficult to raise the funds to pay these men their racially indexed salaries, and for this purpose he taxed the people repeatedly at 1£ sterling per adult man. Unfortunately the price of grain fell into decline, and an accompanying drop in the value of Merino wool brought about an economic slump. The Colony in 1881 laid down a railroad track and flooded the market at Bloemfontein with cheap, foreign-grown wheat, further lowering the prices paid to all highveld grain growers. A severe recession also struck Kimberley. Tshipinare accelerated the transformation of land tenure and sold the land and estates of Bogachu and other Samuelites in this depressed market. On farmlands appropriated by Boers, places where generations had lived productive lives, hundreds of families faced eviction. They fled to kinsmen’s land, where they were sometimes rebuffed. They went to the cities and to the Bechuanaland Protectorate, and

Thursday, June 24, 1880; Issue 7911; “A Jackdaw’s Flight,” shorter notices, *The Leeds Mercury* (Leeds, England), Saturday, December 29, 1883; Issue 14266.

⁸ Enclosure in VAB, before GS 1517: dated 1/12/1882, and 9/12/1882, witnessed by a spate of chiefs and founding Samuelites: Phoi, Ramatlare, Motlabane, Khosiethata, Mokoto, Khosimoloele, Marumo, Tibase, Montsioa Khosi [*sic*], Mutle, Mathubi, Seiphino [Seiphemo], Mothapi [Matlabi?], Botsime, Makhera.

⁹ Enclosure in VAB, VR VIII 1882, no. 249 (Volksraad series), 153, Samuel Moroka to Volksraad, Bultfontein, 9/5/1882.

a surprising number again went to Lesotho. The erstwhile southern highveld Barolong capital, Thaba Nchu town, also lost most of its population, as the center could not hold. There was no rain, and no chiefship. On the other hand, the farms of greater Thaba Nchu became congested, rural ghettos, and furnished annually declining yields.

In the winter of 1884, drought and smallpox struck together. The missionaries turned themselves into doctors and nurses. This was their special domain: the sick could not claim they had no need. Father William Crisp wrote from Thaba Nchu in July, in the worst of the cold, “We have been brought low by pestilence, war and famine. Much of Thaba Nchu is under quarantine.” The missionaries moved convalescents outside the town and “encouraged them to throw up temporary huts with stones and brushwood” to shield them against the wind. Chief Tshipinare gave them two beasts each week for slaughter, but otherwise they survived by “begg[ing] corn” from “the farms.”¹⁰

Samuel Moroka and his allies lived on one such farm that winter, a farm called Roodewalalaagte, owned by a European man named Henegan. Samuel’s people occupied around twenty-five rude huts. They had reaped only meager crops in April and May for two years in a row and were suffering for it. The sickness in the Valley foisted the weight of their ancestral inheritance upon them in a not-unfamiliar guise – sickness and misfortune – and Samuel and Bogachu conspired to take action. While the “force of the pestilence” was finally “abat[ing],”¹¹ they would mobilize a commando and retake Thaba Nchu. The plan was not kept secret, for on 28 June some Boers stole Joel Tshipinare’s cattle and drove them into Lesotho, as if awaiting his father Chief Tshipinare’s elimination. Then in the middle of the night on 8–9 July, “Job” Ramajafi, a Samuelite leader, warned eleven Boers he knew, and others who communicated further with Barolong and Basuto and other “Native” workers on nearby farms. They then armed themselves as well as they could and converged on Thaba Nchu town.¹²

The involvement of Boers, perhaps landless second or third sons, is highlighted in the account of two brothers, Gert and Barend Pretorius, who joined Frans Ferreira and some underage cousins and raided the general store owned by Tshipinare’s uncle, Abraham Setlogelo. They stole blankets, shirts and trousers, “one coat, and a scarf,” and they divvied up the gear on the spot; Gerrit de Marillac saw them while out riding by his farm and was waved off in a threatening manner: “There is the road!”¹³ A *knecht* (servant) Boer reported seeing a dozen white men herding 200 of Setlogelo’s sheep. A six-year-old “Hottentot” boy named Danster, who piloted a wagon to the Pretorius farm

¹⁰ USPG, E 39b: 1884 (1883–4), William Crisp, Thaba Nchu, December 31, 1884.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² VAB, *Friend of the Free State* (hereafter *FFS*), 14/8/1884.

¹³ *FFS*, 31/7/1884; VAB VR IV 1883, no. 256, 114–52, de Marillac to Landdrost of Ladybrand, 10/7/1884.

with the loot, described Ferreira and the others as “cheeky” (*wije gepraat*) and “flushed with themselves.”¹⁴

Bogachu and his band had a busy evening. Late on 8 July the old man raided an ammunition depot in Ladybrand, the fledgling Boer town at the top of the Valley; then he rode to the farms of Brand’s sons, Carl and John, to reassure them, personally, of their future safety; and only then did he go to Thaba Nchu to participate in the coup d’état. “Two Fingoes” and assorted métis men also joined the attackers. Bystanders in the town saw “mainly Basutos” among the aggressors – less an ethnic misjudgment than a political commentary. As the attackers rode in, around 4 AM on Thursday morning, several were further observed to be “blacked up” Boers.¹⁵

Most of the attackers, however, were brown-skinned men in work clothes with homemade weapons. Some of them carried assegais made from “umbrella handles ... with wires attached.” Several carried small arms or shotguns; some, like Samuel, had Martini-Henry breech-loading rifles. But their most effective weapon was the torch. Targeting perhaps 200 households, they ended up incinerating whole sections of town. Father Crisp was “awakened about 5:30 [AM] by the sound of firing, and on going out of the house, found a considerable portion of the Chief’s part of the town [*sic*] on fire, and his own house surrounded by the attacking party.” (Samuel’s men avoided burning schools and mission property.) Tshipinare was lying in bed with his youngest wife, Buku, a daughter of Chief Montshiwa, who supported Samuel. Suddenly Tshipinare sat up and said, “Today I am a dead man.” Grabbing his bandolier, rifle, and jacket, he ran out into the lane in front of his gate and saw that Samuel and his men were already dismounting at the Court House, the building Tshipinare had made for his white magistrate, one of the Camerons. Shots were fired. Tshipinare ran back inside with Joel, his teenage son, who aimed his rifle at the Samuelites’ horses from a window.¹⁶

Hours passed. The Samuelites managed to place burning brush and branches against the exterior walls of the rondavel before running to safety, so that the thatch caught fire; the air inside hung around Tshipinare, Joel, Buku, and several other members of the family, growing thick and acrid.¹⁷ “It must be Bogachu’s commando,” said a despairing Tshipinare. He dashed out the door and tried to break free, if only to save his family. Quickly he was surrounded by Samuelites, who hesitated for a moment to kill him. He leaped into the

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ FFS 24/7/1884; FFS 28/8/1884.

¹⁶ S. M. Molema, *Chief Moroka: His Life, His Times and His People* (Cape Town: Methodist Publishing House, 1951), provides a genealogy. And, admitting one wife only: M. T. L. (anon.), “Thaba’nchu,” *Bloemfontein Quarterly Papers* 55, January 1882, 32–6, in Sources. Besides the ongoing summary of Murray, *Black Mountain*: WITS, Cullen Library, Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA), AB 2259/Bb 1.4, Correspondence re properties: Crisp to Bishop, Thaba Nchu, 11/2/1882, and 2259/Ha2 Cong. of St. Aug. Minute Book, 1893–1902.

¹⁷ And above: British Parliamentary Papers (BPP), 56, 1884–5, Enclosure E, Statement of Privates Jacob Khotho and Dibupua, Basutoland Mounted Police, Monday, July 14, 1884, 95–6.

outhouse at the back of his big yard and slammed the door. The structure had not yet been roofed.

It was already occupied by Big John (*Lang Jan*) Matsheka, his premier counselor.

Big John was a strapping man, light-skinned, of part métis descent; he crouched beside by the hole, as sticks and rocks rained down on the two men's heads. The Samuelites jeered and spat as they threw things. They came with burning brands. Another hour crept by, punctuated by cruelty and invective. A ten-year-old child, Kwai, perished in the flames of Buku's house behind the crowd, and no one noticed: his mother would later find him by stirring the house's ashes with a stick. At half past nine a "great cloud" of smoke hung overhead.¹⁸ Samuel, Bogachu, Ramajafi, and Moletsane's son, and several unidentified, armed Boers, were at the scene as the end came. Big John bid farewell to his chief and stepped out with a placating gesture; a huge shout went up, and he fell, his head bashed open with a rock. Tshipinare emerged and was shot in the chest and head. A second "shout" rose and men in the crowd speared Tshipinare's inert body with assegais and threw more rocks. An old man, Kelepeng, victim of some unrelated grudge, was also stabbed to death. David Ngakantsi, the counselor and partisan, died of beatings sustained that day. According to Moroka family tradition, it was a Boer who fired the round that killed Chief Tshipinare; but it was a multiethnic alliance of vintage highveld form that brought him down.¹⁹

DISCOURSES OF VICTORY

One of the Samuelites, Molema, looked down at Tshipinare's brutalized body and said, "You have to do with our man's children," as if he were still alive, and then, "we have you." He then said to the crowd: "Here lies the cattle-eater" – the eater: the squanderer of estates, consumer of other men's inheritances, interloper, (dead) predator. Bogachu then said, "Here lies the man with his mother's child," signifying that his line would die with him. A man named Lelwane stabbed Joel Tshipinare, and Bogachu wanted to finish the boy, but Samuel conducted him to safe haven with the missionaries.²⁰ "Because your father took the inheritance of others – there he is now – we have killed him," Bogachu said to Joel's face. Samuel himself pronounced directly over Tshipinare and "Lang Jan" Matsheka. "Ah. This is I, who you said, would

¹⁸ WITS, CPSA, as in n. 16, Crisp.

¹⁹ Hope Yonke Phillips, "The Bagaseleka Barolong's Search for a Homeland," B.A. Thesis, University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, 1976, citing an interview with Godfrey Moroka, 21/8/75; Sechele Ookeditse, "History of the Baga-Moroka Barolong of Eastern Botswana," unpublished B.A. Thesis, University of Botswana, 1995; and Francistown Museum, Tati File, "Tati Company, Ltd.," a report put out by the Tati Company in 1988 on the 90th anniversary of the establishment of Francistown; and author's interview with O. O. Segopolo, Moroka Village, 3/2/98.

²⁰ *FFS* 8/28/1884. Or Brand demanded Joel's life be preserved, according to different sources. See BPP 56, n. 17.

die. I am with you, and have appeared suddenly, just as a snake, and you know nothing about it.” An ancestor, especially a foundational or greatest ancestor, was said to manifest itself in transitions as a snake.²¹

Other of Samuel’s men said, “You have wandered,” to the people in the crowd.²² We have seen how Robert Moffat and early Christians rendered their message in this same idiom. Samuel said, “There is your chief.” He then pointed to Tshipinare’s burning house. “We have killed him. Have you been wandering?” Wandering, straying, is *latlhegile*, being away from the herd, so this was also, “have you been sinning?” Bogachu repeated: “Have you wandered? Have you strayed?” Long after the making of religion as a separate domain in South Africa, when one spoke seriously in the course of mass political action, one still spoke in these ways. Wandering, having been taken up as “sinning” by generations of Christians, resonated again in its untranslated ambits.

Samuel sent one of Tshipinare’s wives, Ellen, to come and bathe Tshipinare’s corpse, as was the custom. Someone said that Bogachu told her when she arrived, “Now I have conquered, for I have slain Tshipinare.” Meanwhile Tshipinare was particularized. Soon it was discovered that the small toe of his corpse’s left foot was missing, and a piece of heel skin was also taken, so his body was given to the Methodists for safety. Thursday night “was lit up with the flames of the still burning houses, and was passed with much consternation.”²³ At some point before his burial someone removed Tshipinare’s forehead, and his genitals, and perhaps his heart – and by one account, his entire left arm.²⁴

Brand had a different narrative in mind than this, with a different denouement. He immediately sent men to find some Free State flags and to carry them to Thaba Nchu. A series of logistical moves followed and by 4:00 PM he had had a proclamation drawn up and read, in public, and notarized by available landowners: the Free State henceforth “annexed” Thaba Nchu and all surrounding Barolong lands, beginning immediately. Brand justified his actions to the British by telling their officials, falsely, that Samuel’s uprising and Tshipinare’s killing had been “utterly unforeseen events.”²⁵ His fears at least were real. He worried logically that “coloured people” – all Barolong, Basuto, and erstwhile Korana, “Kaffirs,” or whoever – might descend upon Thaba Nchu to liberate the town. There were around 60,000 “Europeans,” and 80,000 people of “colour,” all told, in his Orange Free State; but there were around 200,000 people in Letsie’s Lesotho, the men yet armed.²⁶

²¹ Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*. Vol. 2, *The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 206, e.g.

²² And below: FFS 8/28/1884, 4/9/1884.

²³ USPG, E 39 B, Crisp, 21/12/1884, verbatim.

²⁴ BPP 56, 1884–5, Enclosure E, cited in n. 17 above.

²⁵ BPP 56, 1884–5, 104, Brand to Colonel Clarke, 31/7/1884.

²⁶ George Theal, *Basutoland Records*, 6 vols. (Cape Town: W. A. Richards, 1883), Vol. 4, 67, 71, 222–7, 1881 census.

Several people referred to Samuel as “coloured,” and some even as “yellow,” implying he was impure for Barolong. But many white people in the Free State at the end of the century still preferred to call all not-white people “coloured.” Shopkeeper Henry Wells referred to Samuel and Bogachu “and other Coloured accused,” and without missing a beat, spoke of “four kafirs” he saw standing by Tshipinare’s body. A woman, Moletse, later testified in Samuel’s trial in Bloemfontein that there was a commando of “coloured people” in a “laager” formation camped at the base of the mountain. Of course, few people in Thaba Nchu or the Free State would feel a need to identify themselves as “the Barolong” in such circumstances. Moletse recognized Samuel and Bogachu among the leaders of the raid: she knew them only as “chiefs.”

The exact formulation of their followers eluded racial thinking. The tribal model might seem especially inadequate, in view of the obviously mixed alliance of classes and races competing for, occupying, and defending Thaba Nchu; but this only made it more important for Brand to emphasize the tribe. The crisis for Brand did not involve sovereignty, parsed by black, brown, and Boer, in varied and interesting ways: it was a tribal issue, a conflict over custom and inheritance, which Brand’s intervention resolved.²⁷ And by taking over as he did, he maintained, he forestalled a Basuto attack and a wider conflagration.

As Colonel Arden Clarke, the top imperial official for Basutoland, knew, chief Letsie did in fact proclaim that Moroka’s land was Basuto-land. The land was like “mafisa’d” cattle, livestock loaned out for milking and breeding, Letsie said, so Thaba Nchu “never at any time belonged to the Free State.” Letsie, though beset with opponents from within and without, declared that the métis of the Caledon Valley were also his “vassals.” He had sheltered the rebellious chief Langelibalele’s people-of-Hlubi warriors in Lesotho some years before. Even Tiyali, a powerful “Xhosa” chief, was “always one of my men,” said Letsie, as shown by his “only listen[ing] to me.”²⁸ That an enlarged (or networked) vision of Basuto might sweep away the colonists did not seem so absurd, and an old Free State “Field Cornet” seized two men visiting from Letsie’s household and held them hostage, just in case.

Samuel and Brand agreed to meet in the Reverend Daniel’s house by the old Wesleyan church, with a white lawyer Samuel had retained.²⁹ Nothing much came of their conversations right away. Indeed, after they retired, Samuel continued to preside as chief, notwithstanding Brand’s semi-occupation, for five more days. People made their way back to their homes, and when it became apparent that neither Letsie’s men nor anyone else was going to join the fray,

²⁷ BPP, 56, 1884–5, 10: Brand to H. C., Hercule Robinson, 13/7/1884, and other correspondence.

²⁸ Ibid., Enclosure E, Chief Letsie to Colonel Clarke, Resident Commissioner, Matsieng, Basutoland, July 16, 1884. Brand does not mention Langelibalele. And WITS, Cullen Library, SAIRR AD 843/B 62.11, Copy Chief Letsie to Colonel Arden Clarke, Resident Commissioner, n.d.; John Noble, *South Africa Past and Present: A Short History of the European Settlements at the Cape* (London: Longmans, 1877), 139; Molema, *Chief Moroka*, 65.

²⁹ BPP, 56, 1884–5, Brand to Clarke, 100, Bloemfontein, July 22, 1884.

Brand told Samuel he would have to surrender. On 17 July, Samuel delivered himself to Harry Hanger, a member of an old métis family going back to pre-Thaba Nchu days. Hanger, deputized as sheriff, kept watch over the “Coloured prisoners” until they could be conducted to Bloemfontein. There they would be tried by a Free State judge.

In court Gert Pretorius and a few other of the Boers were found “not guilty” of any criminal offense, and some other conspirators were released in preliminary fashion. Not all those involved were even charged. Only Samuel and Bogachu were brought to trial on the capital offense of murder. The judge found them guilty, for indeed they had planned and carried out the attack that killed Tshipinare and others, and sentenced them to death. But before the two men could be hanged, on 12 November, an appeals court overturned the verdict.³⁰ The higher court ruled that when and where Samuel committed the act mattered. At the moment of the regicide, he stood in the independent domain of Thaba Nchu, and the murder was not yet subject to Free State law. The annexation itself lying beyond the purview of the court, Brand exiled Samuel and Bogachu and seven others from the Orange Free State, which thereafter was taken to include historical Thaba Nchu – thus barring Samuel forever from returning to the chieftdom.³¹

With his uprooted kinsmen and fellow fighters, including Bogachu’s people, Samuel fled to the village of Sekameng in Lesotho, courtesy of chief Letsie.³²

THE WIDER FRAME: 1880–1900

The closing decades of the century were unkind to most of the people of the highveld. Those of the conquered and free lands of the “Middle” or Caledon River Valley were hurt by drought, famine, disease, and warfare.³³ In the north the peoples of the broken prestige-place orders of the past (crocodile and *rolong* and *ba-rotse* and totemic) struggled under signeurial forms of exploitation. Their attenuated chiefs lost out in bad land deals or outright swindles; their sporadic rebellions were suppressed, their positions in negotiated relationships degraded. Struggling Transvaal Boers also resisted British

³⁰ FFS meticulously carried testimony from trial, which I have drawn from here. Murray, *Black Mountain*, 32; Wales, “The Relationship,” 292–3.

³¹ SAB: Pretoria, South African National Archives (hereafter SAB), NTS 307 1/54: Copy of Brand’s *Proclamatie* of 19/11/1884, banning Samuel, Bogachu, Molekan[g] alias Jan Moroka, Seithamo, Mashomeng alias Karl Mothibi Lebetha (“Lebetta”), Motlagomang, Botsiele, Moreolule alias Job Ramajafi, and Mokgou Molimi alias Zaccheus.

³² WITS CPSA AM 2259 Bbl.3, Diocese of Bloemfontein, Board of Finance letterbook, 1880–86, Secretary, Bloemfontein Mission, 28/2/1885: “Wells and springs which were never known to fail have this season dried up.... Farmers have “trekked” in all directions.”

³³ For recent responses see David B. Coplan, “Land from the Ancestors: Popular Religious Pilgrimage along the South Africa-Lesotho Border,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29, 4 (2003), 30–57; Coplan, “Unconquered Territory: Narrating the Caledon Valley,” *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 13, 2 (2000), 185–206; Coplan, “A River Runs through It: The Meaning of the Lesotho-Free State Border,” *African Affairs*, 100, 398 (2001), 81–116.

imperial control with only intermittent success. Independent highvelders still farming their own territory, such as in Lesotho, often did quite well even in the recession of the 1880s, but Africans lost land, and soon would lose much more of it.³⁴

Looking eastward over the Drakensberg, one finds mobilizations that resemble those on the highveld and which indicate something of the direction the highveld was traveling. The three Ngidi cousins, William, Jonathan, and Mbiyana, rose in Natal's Anglican Bishop John Colenso's organization, in the American Board Mission, and (in Mbiyana's case) came to lead the Uhlanga (*uHlanga*) Church, readopting as "national" the ancient chief's name Hlanga.³⁵ They permitted the associative devices of life, polygamy and beer, and blurred the format of prayer with previous chiefly devotions. In the Ciskei, John Gawler's "Native Educational Association" came to order in 1880, and the "Inseparably United" or "African Aborigines Association" (*Imbumba Yama Nyama*, after the recorded words of Ntsikana) formed with 300 members in 1883. There was further an agrarian "Thembu Association" in 1884 and a "Saint Ntsikana Memorial Association"; in the same period, Nehemiah Tile organized a "Thembu Church" in alliance with chiefly authority in Thembuland, building on his understanding of the Church of England's relationship with the Queen.³⁶

In these emulations and reemulations, the paradigm of monarchic/chiefly/ancestral authority was brought back together and made visible. In many parts of South Africa, the American-based African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church developed in similar circumstances; its success lay in addressing the mismatch of Christianity's promise with people's everyday experiences.³⁷ For the midlevel worker in galley kitchens and factories, shops, and yards, whose workplace life was removed from any extended residential, kin-connected community, the Church offered a home like no other. Its pastors emphasized self-sufficiency, social justice, and pan-African solidarity. Its sermons resonated in the farmlands with both migrant laborers and truncated chiefships.³⁸

³⁴ Timothy Keegan, *Rural Transformations in Industrializing South Africa: The Southern Highveld to 1914* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 60, reminds us however that at the very end of the century, turmoil allowed Africans to renegotiate sharecropping agreements aggressively; H. Saker and J. Aldridge, "The Origins of the Langeberg Rebellion," *Journal of African History*, 12, 2 (1971), 299–317; John Laband, *The First Boer War, 1880–1881* (London: Pearson, Longman, 2005), 224.

³⁵ See discussion in Chapter 3, this volume.

³⁶ Andre Odendaal, *Vukani Bantu!: The Beginnings of Black Protest Politics in South Africa to 1912* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1984), chap. 1; Christopher Saunders, "Tile and the Thembu Church: Politics and Independency on the Eastern Cape Frontier in the Late 19th Century," *Journal of African History*, 11, 4 (1970), 553–70.

³⁷ Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, "Christianity and Colonialism in South Africa," *American Ethnologist*, 13, 1 (February 1986), 1–22; Deborah Gaitskell, "'Wailing for Purity': Prayer Unions, African Mothers and Adolescent Daughters 1912–1940," in Shula Marks and Richard Rathbone, eds., *Industrialisation and Social Change: African Class Formation, Culture, and Consciousness 1870–1930* (London: Longman, 1982), 338–57.

³⁸ James Campbell, *Song of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

Sometimes, its ministers preached a politically conservative message and recommended paying Caesar his due. Sometimes, however, they spoke of “the country” and “the black man.”

In South Africa’s rolling maize fields, on corrugated lanes and dirt tracks, pastors black and white were usually permitted to travel on their own recognition, a special exception to pass laws. AME preachers, however, were made to apply for special passes; and as elsewhere in British Africa, imperial officials also barred foreign preachers of any race from traveling in already “missionized” districts and municipalities, albeit without success. By 1900 every major mission and school, including Lovedale College, had lost persons and even whole congregations to the AME Church or to denominations that the AME split or reshuffled into, and more and more independent Christian pastors took to the field. Abel Gabashane, the presiding elder of the AME in Potschefstroom, said that “white people would be driven out of Africa” and that black people would set up “a new kingdom.” Was this a call to action, a bugle before massed troops, or a metaphorical evocation of the endtimes?³⁹

In Natal, as well, land was the issue, and – just as on the highveld – chiefs’ powers were split away from rights over production. The Transvaal Boers took part of Zululand after its imperial conquest in 1880. More generally, Natal’s administration denied “the essential fact of chiefly authority,” removing its access to land and so creating a situation in which – as one headman complained – “we are living on the edge of cliffs.”⁴⁰ Several villages in the Maphumulo district experienced bursts of energy in Christian matters in the ensuing years. One intense wave of religious “enthusiasm” swept over Umvoti and Maphumulo after the 1897 Rinderpest epizootic, perhaps stimulated by a traveling American preacher.⁴¹ An unmarried Christian woman began confessing, not only for herself, but for others, too, and instead of hearing her as accusatory – and perhaps as recognizing sorcery – the missionaries called the listed infractions “sins.” They taught their trance-like ways of hoping and wishing, and met in the architecture sponsored for the purpose, their churches. The people destroyed charms and confessed adulteries, hidden debts, and even murders; the nervous missionaries welcomed them to Christianity.⁴²

³⁹ Gabashane quoted in VAB CO 295 5477/03 Resident Magistrate Edenburg, ORC, to C. O. Bloemfontein, 10/8/03; and J. Mutero Chirenje, *Ethiopianism and Afro-Americans in Southern Africa, 1883–1916* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 105 ff.

⁴⁰ Nicolas Cope, *To Bind the Nation: Solomon kaDimuzulu and Zulu Nationalism, 1913–1933* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1997), 5; and (quote) Jeff Guy, *The Maphumulo Uprising* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal-Kwazulu Press, 2006), 42.

⁴¹ First discussed by Norman Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants, and Politics in Southeast Africa, 1835–1880: African Christian Communities in Natal, Pondoland, and Zululand* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978), and Shula Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906–8 Disturbances in Natal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

⁴² William C. Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu: A Sympathetic Study of the Magico-Religious Practices and Beliefs of the Bantu Tribes of Africa* (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1928), 390; Chris Lowe, “Revivalism and Independent Church Movements in Natal, 1890–1910,”

Finally, let us push this re-enframing to one further domain. The leadership of the 1897 Chimurenga rebellion in what is today western Zimbabwe, which briefly united Shona-speakers and Matebele against the British South Africa Company, was known in the colonial press as “M’limo,” or in the conventional orthography of Sechuana, the language of most of the “Ma-Tebele” subjects who settled the Zimbabwean highlands in 1839, as *modimo*: ancestor.⁴³ Note that the Chimurenga alliance worked in the manner of prior highveld amalgamations, putting forth a common descent under a supreme (but now anonymized) forebear, bringing together people of varied ethnicity. The M’limo (*modimo*) unity should be viewed in the precisely contemporary context of the same ideas circulating in Maphumulo, Umtata, Barue (Mozambique), and the highveld. Whether the alliance developed an oracular vehicle or not is a difference that can too easily be overstressed. Devotees not only referred to “M’Limo,” Ancestor/God, but they also called Mzilikazi’s successor, Chief Lobengula, “M’Limo.”⁴⁴ Just like Moshoeshe, Dingane, and in some measure every great chief.

By the end of the century such a rebellion appeared to be a bizarre conflation of worship and political unrest. The treatment in the *New York Times* afforded the killing of one “M’limo” authority will suffice to underline the point:

KILLED THE MATABELE GOD

Burnham, the American Scout, May End the Uprising. Pretoria, June 24 [1896].

Burnham, the American scout, found in a cave in the Matoppo Hills the famous Matabele god Mlimo, the prompter and fosterer of the Matabele outbreak, and vainly tried to capture Mlimo alive, but, being unable to do so, killed him. It is believed that the death of their god will discourage the natives and lead to the suppression of the revolt.⁴⁵

Walter Rodney Seminar, Boston University, 26 February 1996; and Michael Mahoney, “The Millennium Comes to Mapumulo: Popular Christianity in Rural Natal, 1866–1906,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25, 3 (September 1999), 375–91.

⁴³ On the matter of whether there was already a “high-god” monotheism in Zimbabwe, connected or not to Zambesi (Portuguese) Catholic métis, Terry Ranger, Richard Werbner, and Julian Cobbing a generation ago argued whether “M’limo” was the same thing as the “Shona” Mwari (or Mwali) oracle, or an indigenous or borrowed idea, or whether Mwari itself predated the arrival of Mzilikazi’s kingdom. See, e.g., Cobbing, “The Absent Priesthood: A Look at the Rhodesian Risings of 1896–7,” *Journal of African History*, 18, 1 (1977), 61–84, and next note.

⁴⁴ The Catholicism of Matthew Schofeleers’ depiction in *River of Blood: The Genesis of a Martyr Cult in Southern Malawi, c. A.D. 1600* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992) is apparent. The M’limo system got advance word of the Rinderpest and built its prestige: Frank Sykes, *With Plumer in Matabeleland ... during the Rebellion of 1896* (London, Westminster: Archibald Constable, 1897), 256; see also David Maxwell’s treatment of the BSAC’s intersection with *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe: A Social History of the Hwesa People, c. 1870s–1990s* (Edinburgh: IAI, 1999), 34, and chap. 2.

⁴⁵ *New York Times*, 25 June 1896; Sykes, *With Plumer in Matabeleland*, 259–61; referencing “Mziki” (aka A. A. Campbell), *Mlimo: The Rise and Fall of the Matabele* (Pietermaritzburg: Natal Witness, 1926), inter alia.

THE SAMUELITES AT THE ENDS OF THE EARTH: THE
TATI DISTRICT

Let us return to another projection of highveld politics into the twentieth century: the Samuelites of Thaba Nchu, the people supporting Samuel Moroka as chief. For many years, they lived a peripatetic life dependent on others. They moved northwest to Khunwana, to chief Moshote's, on the border with Bechuanaland. The year the railway came through, in 1897, Samuel gave his address as Kraaipan, the Khunwana railway siding. Then, just before the South African War (and the Siege of Mafeking in particular) devastated Khunwana, Samuel struck a deal with a colonial "land company" which controlled a strip of territory close to the scene of Burnham's colonial action against M'limo just described. This so-called Tati District lay at the headwaters of the Shashi and Ramaquabana rivers, the no-man's-land edging "Matebeleland." On the western side lay Chief Khama's still-powerful highveld people-of-Ngwato (crocodile) chiefdom; indeed, local oral tradition recalls that it was the people-of-Ngwato's royal court who provided the territory, not the land company.⁴⁶ Samuel and a handful of others traveled to Tati District partly by rail and partly by foot.

Samuel moved from town to town with the Reverend Marcus Gabashane of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church, and Samuel spoke to at least one AME conference along the way. Without renouncing Anglicanism, Samuel found the AME congenial, as it institutionalized local autonomies and drew most of its converts from Methodism. Before they left Khunwana, he and Gabashane successfully brought the entire London Missionary Society congregation there, including Khunwana's LMS "Native" pastor, into the AME Church. The pastor was immediately promoted to full Reverend.

Scores of Barolong joined Samuel, from various places across South Africa, especially from the Caledon Valley and other parts of the Free State, but many from much farther afield. About 400 persons made their way north and east with him and behind him, and converged on the village settlement called Matsiloje in 1898. They formed the core of the Samuelites in exile.⁴⁷

Matsiloje and the Tati District lie in the area in which historical Shona- and Sechuana-speakers separated and overlapped and mingled, as discussed in [Chapter 2](#). Matsiloje had been known as a watering place for men and cattle

⁴⁶ WITS, CPSA AM 2259 Bbl.3, Diocese of Bloemfontein, Board of Finance letterbook, 1880–86, Sec'y, Bloemfontein Mission, 28/2/1885. D. Kousu, in Isaac Schapera, ms. "Land Tenure in the Tati District" [a 1943 report], with Dr. Thornton, in Gaborone, Botswana National Archives (BNA), DCF 7/24.

⁴⁷ Murray, *Black Mountain*, 309, n. 14, and James Campbell, *Song of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 188 and 372, citing Transvaal Native Affairs Department, Annual Reports, 30/6/05, B.35, and *Voice of Missions* (November 1898, February 1899), "Tlhalogang" (see Sources); and O. O. Segopolo, interview, Moroka Siding, 3/2/1998. In 1898 Samuel and Bogachu negotiated to lease land for a total of thirty-six men and their families in the Tati District.

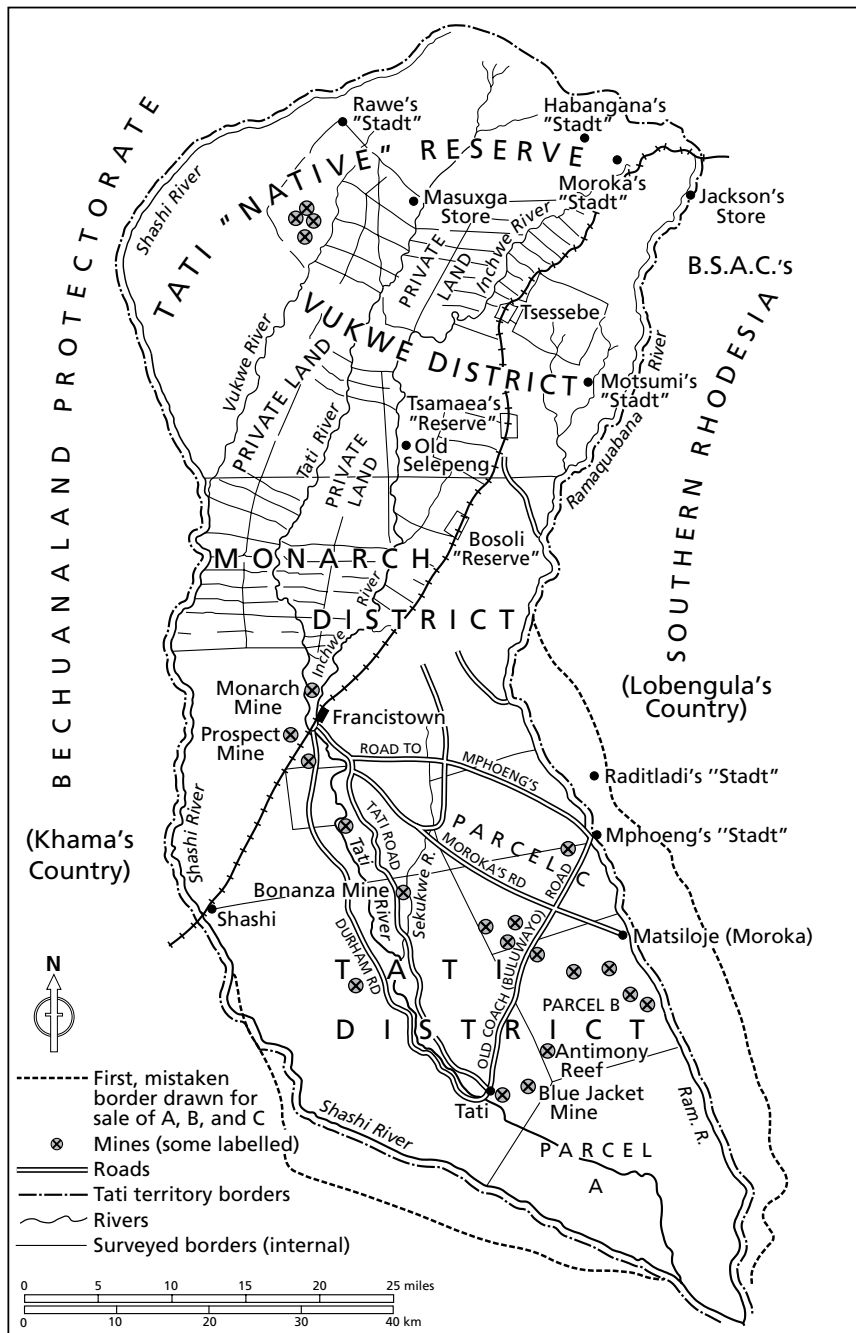


FIGURE 5.1. Map of Tati District, 1915. After a map drawn by the author, from "Plan of the Tati Territory," Botswana National Archives, Assistant Commissioner, 5/32, Revised Survey.

en route to the Rand. The name meant the “rock-rabbit” place, *madzilodge* in the region’s speech.⁴⁸ The exploitation of this lightly forested effluvial watershed had begun in ancient times, as local Zimbabwe-associated (ZP) walling and other remains suggest. Mining recommenced with a brief European gold “fever” in 1867, but Tati’s mines were soon eclipsed by the South African gold fields and all but abandoned. Thereafter Tati District and “Tati Town” remained a colonial backwater, looted for ivory and timber. Getting there with supplies was a two- to three-month one way journey by ox-wagon from Kimberley, brutal and wearing. In 1880 Daniel Francis founded Francistown, subsequently known for its “hordes of ruffians and desperadoes” cantering through the town and sacking the general store.⁴⁹ After the railway arrived, missing the all but dead Tati Town “capital” by fifty kilometers, Francistown benefited, but still it remained a place visited by men interested mostly in going somewhere else. A common complaint was that the “general surroundings” lay in a “disgraceful state of filth, tins and bottles lying everywhere, there being no attempt made to keep it clean ... natives being allowed to excrete where they please.”⁵⁰

There were, however, chiefdoms out in the Tati District hinterlands, mainly Kalanga-speaking ones; and so the Tati Company was not only a “land company,” but also a “people company.” It endeavored to rule over people without appeal and to derive income from them in the process. To an extent, the Company fit the historian Leroy Vail’s paradigmatic profile of a predatory but weak, or “feeble,” colonialism, of a type more often associated with central Africa or northern Mozambique.⁵¹ The company “traded” in natural resources to raise cash, as its scant resident personnel, irritable, uneducated, and alcoholic, exacted fees and rents. The company claimed the sole right to discipline, and issued its own penal code; the British imperium only advised that it had “no general power to legislate.” With its limited resources, several

⁴⁸ Ookeditse, “History of the Baga-Moroka Barolong,” interview with Zacharia Malefho, b. 1912.

⁴⁹ BNA, BNB 895 9–11–59 HC 155: 1897, correspondence with the British South African Police (BSAP), Mafeking, 13/10/1897; Harare, Zimbabwe, National Archives of Zimbabwe (ZNA), “Log Book of the Northern Light Gold Mining Company,” July 12, [to October 14], 1881, Tati Company material, thanks to Neil Parsons, and see Parsons, *A New History of Southern Africa* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 142.

⁵⁰ Christopher A. S. Koraya, “The Origin and Development of Tatitown District in Francistown to the 1970s,” B.A. Thesis, April 1985, University of BoLeSwa; and BNA BNB 895 9–11–59 HC 155: 1897, correspondence with BSAP, Mafeking, 13/10/1897.

⁵¹ Leroy Vail, “Mozambique’s Chartered Companies: The Rule of the Feeble,” *Journal of African History*, 17, 3 (1976), 389–416; Vail, “Ecology and History: The Example of Eastern Zambia,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 3, 2 (1977), 129–55; Vail, “‘Tawani, Machambero!’ Forced Cotton and Rice Growing on the Zambezi,” *Journal of African History*, 19 (1978), 239–63; Landeg White, *Magomero: Portrait of an African Village* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); cf. Eric Allina-Pisano, “Negotiating Colonialism: Africans, the State, and the Market in Manica District, Mozambique, 1895 – c. 1935,” Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, History, 1999.

times “reorganized” in bankruptcy, the Tati Company remained a makeshift formation of capital built around local speculators and self-policing chiefs.⁵²

Adjacent to several divisions of Kalanga-speaking villages, chief Rawe Sekoko presided over an immigrant highveld community, a remnant of an old *ha rotse* chiefship (*khurutshe*) freshly based at the village of Selepeng. Rawe’s people never amounted to more than a few hundred. The provisions that the Company laid down for Rawe were extended to Samuel, and he promised far greater numbers. When Samuel signed a lease with the Tati Company on behalf of “his people,” however, a clause stated that no “Cape Colony Kafirs” were permitted to come along, and no “Hottentots” or “Bastards”: only the preexisting “tribe.” Samuel and other chiefs marked an “X,” indebting settlers for ten shillings per hut per year on pain of eviction.⁵³

The Tati Company extorted the incoming Samuelites’ rail fares from Rawe – some £200. Samuel would repay the debt to them, and not the Company, which avoided any financial exposure.⁵⁴ The Company stipulated that it might remove Samuel and his people at any time for any reason; that Samuelites must buy their cattle at Company prices; that Samuelite men must hire themselves to white miners at what were called the “prevailing wages.”⁵⁵ The attitude toward further negotiations can be seen in the Company’s correspondence with London, in which the resident British officials were scolded for “listen[ing] to niggers” in the District. As one agent wrote, contracts were “necessarily vague” because chiefs were “ignorant savage[s].” The great thing was simply that they never feel “they are the masters.”⁵⁶

⁵² I.e., BNA, High Commissioner (HC) 155: enclosing Tati Concessions Ltd., “Annexure to the Rules and Regulations of 1897. Penal Regulations and Administrative Cde, [1897],” Acting Imperial Secretary, Cape Town, to G. Harford Smith, Esq., 13/10/1897; and Francistown, Tati Company Museum (FTCM), Tati Company, Ltd., Directors’ Reports, 1916–1924; and Henderson K. Tapela, “The Tati District of Botswana, 1866 to 1969,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Sussex, History, 1976.

⁵³ Both quotes, Harare, Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe National Archives (ZNA), TA 2/1/3/2 Extract from Letter, Mgr. C. R. Vigers, Tati, 14/3/1896, in reference to Rawe. Rawe: see BNA DCF 7/14 “Land Tenure in Tati District,” Isaac Schapera’s report to the Bechuanaland Protectorate, and Tapela, “The Tati District,” chaps. 4 and 5. Colonial office to Tati Company, 23/7/03, alludes to testimony by an “old man” that in 1854 “no natives” had lived in the Tati District.

⁵⁴ ZNA TA 2/1/2 Memorandum ... Friday, July 3, 1903; and ZNA, N. 3/5/06, S 235/431, doc. M. 755/1566, 131, Native Commissioner to Manager, Globe and Phoenix Mine, 12/3/27.

⁵⁵ Material for this section is taken from ZNA TA 2/1/3/2, and /5; General Manager, Francistown, 28/11/02; 24/9/06; and TA 2/2/2, Agreement with Samuel “and his tribe,” October 5, 1898. I visited the Blue Jacket and Monarch Mine, Tati Town, and other Francistown/Northeast (Tati) District locations twice, and several ZNA TA 2/1/3/2 photographs also aided me in building the image conveyed here: “New Prospect Staff, Jan. ’98,” shows a dog smoking a pipe, and African boys; “Sifting Room in ‘Administration House,’” 1898; “Rawe’s Stadt, 23–4–04,” “Arrival of Lewanika,” and “Timber cut by Moroka’s People [Samuelites] about 8 miles north of Moroka’s Staadt, Ramaquabana River, Dec. 1st, 1904,” and 30–1: “H. H. Ralph Williams lecturing Rawe’s people,” with Williams and his men in tweeds.

⁵⁶ Officially thirty-six men and their families, BNA RC 4/8 William Jones, General Manager, Tati Concessions, Ltd. to Resident Commissioner, Mafeking, 29/7/1898.

Just across the Ramaquabana River to the east, where Cecil Rhodes's British South Africa Company (BSAC) ruled, two junior courts from Khama's ruling crocodile-associated house had been relocated in exile. They were the people of Mphoeng and the people of Raditladi. As the local BSAC subaltern discovered, Chief Raditladi behaved like an incorporative chief and drew followers from many other chiefs "throughout the district," even from the local Catholic mission, Empandeni. This blurred the matter of just who the people of Raditladi were, and the official declared an end to this typical highveld process.⁵⁷ "If you are not of your Chief's tribe whose people are you?" he demanded shrilly. "Who gave you permission to go?"⁵⁸ Overall, one observes in Tati several overlapping webs of authority: a set of Company-overseers, wishing to deal only with tribes; wider regional paramount chiefships; and local chiefs-in-the-making resisting total subservience to larger powers, drawing on the ideological resources of highveld politics.

The argument below is that apparently diverse and hybrid mobilizations, such as those of the Reverend Isaiah Shembe, A. A. S. le Fleur, and Samuel Moroka, represent similar efflorescences of the same political tradition, albeit set in varied circumstances. South African leaders, Garveyites, ancestor-centered mobilizations, and charismatic Christians, all reintegrated an unnamed ancestor with their pragmatic alliances; and like chiefs to the north, they also kept the issue of the land in the forefront.

TOWARD UNION (1910)

The Samuelites' migration was not the only highveld peasant migration, but most were thwarted or deflected. African farm workers stayed put and fed the torrent of grain entering the Transvaal under the 1896 "Potchefstroom Convention," negotiated for European owners in the Free State; at a few shillings per bag, production attained a monetized value that year of about £100,000 per month.⁵⁹ The Rinderpest devastated southern Africa's cattle herds, which were often a repository of wealth even after rights to land had been lost. The British laid the railroad a hundred miles away from free Basuto farms, further facilitating Boers' profits over independent highveld farmers. At the end of the century came a rebellion against tribalization and dispossession by people of Venda in the Limpopo Valley. Then the South African War (also called the Anglo-Boer War) came, and hurt everyone. By 1900 only fortunate non-Europeans maintained access to fields and grazing, and mostly in return for grain. More often than not highveld people were sharecroppers or rural proletarians without defensible rights in land.

⁵⁷ ZNA, TA 2/1/3/2, Native Commissioner to Buluwayo Superintendent, Plumtree, 4/8/18.

⁵⁸ ZNA, SG 2/1/1-5 ("New Survey at Bu Kelewe ... Mengwe"), and N3 24/21-25, 15 September 1921, and 23/6/1921, recalling Board of Directors' decision in 1909. "W" in "Who" in the quote is not capitalized in the source, and follows a comma.

⁵⁹ Keegan, *Rural Transformations*, 13-28.

The South African War pitted Great Britain's Redcoats against rebellious Boers of the inland "republics," the South African Republic (the Transvaal) and the Orange Free State. Recently historians have emphasized the experience of nonwhite combatants, martyrs, victims, and opportunists in the war.⁶⁰ Broadly speaking, the object of the war for the British was to unify a European leadership in South Africa under British guidance and stabilize the exploitation and marketing of mineral wealth; the object for the Republics was to repel the British and to maintain and extend their own forms of sovereignty. The British armed and fielded highveld Africans as bearers and troops, and the Boers put Africans in fenced concentration camps; both sides however expropriated their food and their labor at tremendous human cost. The enemy Boers were held widely in sympathy, not only in the Empire, but inside Britain – even as more and more of them switched sides to fight for the British as the conflict dragged on.⁶¹

Although Samuel had promised the Tati Company that 5,000 people would soon follow the initial settlers to Matsiloje, the war made any coordinated migration impossible.⁶² Afterward, it was felt, the plan would become operational again.

Nonetheless, in the interim, the Kalanga-speaking chiefs living in Tati were forced to respect Samuel's imported authority for the purposes of collecting hut-taxes. The Company effectively understood resettled South African chiefs as superior in culture to the local, pagan primitives. In consequence many of them moved into Khama's chiefdom in the British-ruled Bechuanaland Protectorate, where they kept the legal right to own firearms.⁶³ Samuel took advantage of the lapse in colonial attention brought by war and managed to visit Bloemfontein briefly in 1902. The same year, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church finally came to Thaba Nchu.⁶⁴ David Hlabangue and the Reverend Jacob Xaba quickly formed a

⁶⁰ Bernard Mbenga, "The Role of the Bakgatla of the Pilanesberg in the South African War," in Greg Cuthbertson, Albert Grundlingh and Mary-Lynn Suttie, eds., *Writing a Wider War: Rethinking Gender, Race, and Identity in the South African War, 1899–1902* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002), 85–110; Donald Denoon, "Participation in the "Boer War": People's War, People's Non-War, or Non-People's War?," in Bethwell Ogot, ed., *War and Society in Africa* (London: Cass, 1972), 109–14; Bill Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War: A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899–1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), esp. 99–107, 112, on the Boer war on "Coloured" people, and 133, 178–9 on highveld contests over land; and Peter Warwick, *Black People and the South African War, 1899–1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), esp. 152–62.

⁶¹ Notwithstanding the British invention of the concentration camp for Boers/Afrikaners.

⁶² Samuel claimed that 5,000 people would follow him shortly thereafter, BNA RC 4/8 William Jones, General Manager, Tati Concessions, Ltd. to Resident Commissioner, Mafeking, 29/7/1898.

⁶³ Especially after the 1897 Jameson Raid. ZNA NB 6/5/2/4 Report of Natives Living West of Bululima (n.d.). See also Catrien van Waarden, *The Oral History of the Bakalanga of Botswana* (Occasional Paper No. 2) (Gaborone: Botswana Society, 1988).

⁶⁴ BNA RC 8/5 Moroka: October 1902, Samuel entered Bloemfontein (Resident Magistrate Thaba Nchu, to Colonial Secretary, Bloemfontein, 7/10/02).

congregation of fifty, to whom “they preach[ed] the superiority of the Black man over the White.”⁶⁵

After the Empire regained control in South Africa, it immediately moved closer to a codified tribalism, in which “Natives” were delineated separately from the citizenship reserved for white men. No treaty provision was fashioned to protect the political rights of the true majority. The South African Native Affairs Committee (SANAC) of 1903–05 from the start trended toward a tribal solution to the problem posed by Africans. Records show that prominent names in this period crossed the road, officially, from Barolong to Coloured.⁶⁶ The specific recommendations of Lionel Curtis and the views of the Colonial Secretary, Lord Selbourne, on the possibility of a “closer union,” all required the preservation of a depoliticized rural substructure, in other words, the tribe.⁶⁷ True, Selbourne favored a “civilization test” that would enfranchise a growing urban nonwhite citizenry, but those views did not prevail. Rather, there came the first considerations of how custom and tribal “religion” might help stabilize and control highveld people, in a Greater South Africa planned to include the Bechuanaland Protectorate, Swaziland and Lesotho.⁶⁸

In the narrow sense, Lord Alfred Milner’s reconstruction program, which sought to encourage British people to settle in this future South Africa, met with failure. Neither did the planned incorporation of the “Protectorates” come to pass. At Taung, near Vryburg, two “prophets” arose and heralded glory in “this life and the next,” predicting the triumph of black over white. One of them called himself Jesus.⁶⁹ Among the whites, after Milner, there

⁶⁵ VAB CO 195 5477/03, Resident Magistrate Edenburg, ORC, to C. O. Bloemfontein, 10/8/03.

⁶⁶ Nehemiah Motshumi, 1903: VAB CO 195, 5473/03. E.g., others: VAB LTN 2/3/4 N.1/16/5, M --- ; KAP MOOC 6/9/505 - # 2252. 14/1/4, “A 1925” S. L --- ; passport applications.

⁶⁷ John Cell, *Segregation: The Highest Stage of White Supremacy: The Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Martin Legassick, “British Hegemony and the Origins of Segregation in South Africa, 1901–14,” in William Beinart and Saul Dubow, eds., *Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth-Century South Africa* (London: Routledge, 1995), 43–59; Adam Ashforth, *The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth Century South Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); Martin Chanock, *Making of South African Legal Culture*; and Chanock, *Law, Custom, and Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); for the bifurcated state: Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizens and Subjects: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 89.

⁶⁸ On Selbourne, aka William Waldegrave Palmer, see David E. Torrence, *The Strange Death of the Liberal Empire: Lord Selbourne in South Africa* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996), 121.

⁶⁹ See Vivian Bickford-Smith, “Writing about Englishness: South Africa’s Forgotten Nationalism,” in Graham MacPhee and Prem Poddar, eds., *Empire and After: Englishness in Postcolonial Perspective* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007), and Bickford-Smith, “Revisiting Anglicization in the Nineteenth Century Cape Colony,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 31 (May 2003), 82–95; Elleke Boehmer, *Empire, the National and the Post Colonial, 1890–1920: Resistance and Interaction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), on “Rolong” Englishness, 133; and Charles Reed, “Respectable Subjects of the Queen: Royal Tours of Southern Africa and Imperial Citizenship, 1860–1901,” unpublished

came the preparation for Union, and the state was given over to two men formerly in rebel uniform, Louis Botha and Jan Christian Smuts. The new government commenced a Native Affairs Department or NAD, vesting its secretarial authority in a “native administrator” acting as the head of “tribal” life. The NAD initiated a period of racialized rule, a “Segregationist era,” and reinstated chiefship as a tool in its arsenal of authority.

At the same time, as we will see further, highveld people still strove to organize and mobilize themselves, still entrained selfhood, alliance, community, and greatness. They distinguished their efforts from compromised colonial chiefships by drawing energy from international streams of content flowing into the Atlantic world, especially from America: African-American America. The AME church was but one part of this trend; historians are only now grasping the extent of the Caribbean and West Indian impact on Africa in the early twentieth century. It is clear that Atlantic contacts helped develop massive societal formations in West Africa, some of which came to be registered as ethnicities. Just as Garveyism, and the Prophet Harris’s movement in 1914 in eastern Liberia, and Yoruba nationalism in Nigeria all drew on cosmopolitan flows of information and persons across the Atlantic Ocean, so in the 1910s and 1920s did South African ethnic nationalisms, Pentecostalism, the Watchtower, and the Zion Christian Church.

It was through the creativity of South African organizers, in their laying of new paths to self-determination, that the AME church developed and splintered at the start of the new century. Eventually it fed dozens of “Ethiopian” churches, activist, independent, most with their own preachers, but doctrinally orthodox in worship. Simultaneously, fiery Western missionaries, in an offshoot tradition of their own, helped pluralize and radicalize Christianity further. Joseph Booth, a missionary for antiracist Seventh Day Adventists, seeded a pastorate in Malawi in the early 1890s, which migrant workers carried into South Africa; a few years later, representatives of Alexander Dowie’s Zion City, Illinois, church, joined them in major urban centers. Dowie’s church supplied the appellation “Zionist” to a variety of Christian churches with fervent, public healing ceremonies. In addition there were the plain Pentecostals, fortified by several midwestern Americans from the 1906 interracial Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, California. “Whole native congregations” joined the Pentecostal “Apostolic Faith Mission” after 1907, “thousands” of new members appearing on the highveld. One missionary had thirty-five African preachers under him in 1909. Nor were glossalia and other Pentecostal-type phenomena confined to Zion-style or Pentecostal churches. At a mass AME meeting in Bloemfontein, AME clergy unexpectedly encountered their people practicing “Apostolic” and “ecstatic” worship.⁷⁰

paper, April 2008; and Ronald Hyam, *The Failure of South African Expansionism, 1908–1948* (New York: Africana, 1972); Marie-Louise Martin, *The Biblical Concept of Messianism and Messianism in South Africa* (Morija: Morija Sesuto Book Depot, 1964), 109 (“Jesus”).

⁷⁰ Jean Comaroff, *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); David Maxwell, “Historicizing

The nascent Native Affairs Department (NAD) took a dim view of these trends and proclaimed a law in 1909 whereby land-use rights for churches would be granted only according to “the stability of the applicant organization.” As we have seen, the tradition of fervent prayer emerged in the early days of the establishment Christian missions, which encouraged supplicants’ direct engagement with God in the context of a world about to be incinerated. Now that these ideas again appeared to underpin African leadership, they were perceived as threatening. The NAD wanted neither public healing and street preaching, nor sudden gatherings, nor mass conversions. Their experts would weigh “the danger of discord arising from the introduction of a divisive element into close proximity to established spheres of mission work” before they recognized any new church.⁷¹ Only “stable” organizations might speak to God or of God without fear of interruption, and “stability” was no Pentecostal or Adventist trait, as their congregations grew and articulated liberation “in this world as well as the next.”⁷²

The new Christian organizations rode up to the cusp of recognized insurgent behavior and then claimed only to be talking. Rumors circulated and frightened white people. A rumor east of the Drakensberg had it that the ancestors were coming to usher in a new dispensation, and the farmlands were to be prepared by the mass slaughter of pigs.⁷³ Then an actual rebellion broke out in Natal: the “Bambatha Rebellion” and the Maphumulo uprising of 1906, over the government’s taxation and land policies, replacing the millenarian fundamentalism of the previous decade. After the suppression of the rebellion, the courts assigned blame to a witchdoctor pulling strings behind the scenes, a figure who did not really exist. Similarly conceiving the rebellion in anti-Christian terms, the liberal and reformer Charles Loram, in his 1906 report on Natal’s educational system, recommended conversion as a cure for the “tribe,” which must be rid of the “cramping, retarding, and even terrifying” aspects of

Christian Independency: The Southern African Pentecostal Movement, c. 1908–60,” *Journal of African History*, 40, 2 (1999), 248; and David Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and the Rise of a Zimbabwean Transnational Religious Movement* (London: James Currey, 2006).

⁷¹ Bengt G. M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* (London: James Clarke, 2005; originally published 1948), 68.

⁷² John Higgenson, “Liberating the Captives: Independent Watchtower as an Avatar of Colonial Revolt in Southern Africa and Katanga, 1908–1941,” *Journal of Social History*, 26, 1 (Fall 1992), 60 (55–80); the classic monograph is Karen Fields, *Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); and see also Terence Ranger, “The Mwana Lesa Movement of 1925,” in Terence Ranger and John Weller, eds., *Themes in the Christian History of Central Africa* (London: Heinemann, 1982), 45–75; Jean-Luc Vellut, “Resistances et espaces de liberte dans l’histoire coloniale du Zaïre: Avant la marche a l’indépendance, ca. 1876–1945,” in Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, Alain Forest, and Herbert Weiss, eds., *Rebellion–Revolution au Zaïre, 1963–1965* (Paris: Editions L’Harmattan, 1987), 2 vols., Vol. 1, 34–5.

⁷³ SAB 334/2565, Gabashane, Resident Manager Vryburg to Secretary Native Affairs Department, 23/7/06.

its “primitive religion.” Only Christianity would remake people at their core, penetrating “the heart of their political, social and economic life.”⁷⁴

If the “the tribal Zulus” in their distressed circumstances were also experiencing “social chaos ... in a spiritual and cultural desert,” if Christianity was required for their ultimate salvation, perhaps Isaiah Shembe might be their “messiah.” Raised in Harrismith, by the Free State’s eastern border with Natal, Shembe was influenced by American preaching and founded his ministry in 1909, just as Pentecostal worship began to spread in his part of the country. Shembe married into the Zulu royal house and wrote highly compact and resonant hymns for his followers, which extolled himself and God and the messiah and the Great Chief, in mutually overlapping and reinforcing terms. Everywhere he went, he healed people, enjoined them to prayer, and for many years, told them to recommit themselves to their own churches. Although he could not read, when he traveled around Natal he carried a clipboard and pen, like a tax-collector.⁷⁵

Shembe’s rhetoric stressed core elements of the highveld political tradition, if in a slightly displaced register. His foundational narrative, written by others from his verbal account, starts with his own parentage. Establishing the ancestral nature of Shembe’s chiefship, it does not begin with God, nor mention the divine in any way, but only supplies the names of his paternal grandparents. Then comes the following:

During the time of Siteya’s pregnancy the Voice spoke to her [Shembe’s mother], in short saying, “You will give birth to a child who will be a Servant.”

The voice (*umoya, mowa*), or “chest,” or “breath,” was what white missionaries spoke of alternately as the soul and the Spirit of God. Now it was back-translated as “voice” again. Shembe’s father Mayekisa, who had migrated from Langalibalele’s exhausted chiefship to Harrismith, supposedly said, “I have given birth to a son, the one who will receive my inheritance,” and Shembe was named “Inheritor” of cattle (*uMudliwamafa*). Shembe traveled with a sheep trader named Michel Eksteen and told audiences that he

⁷⁴ Shula Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906–8 Disturbances in Natal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 114, 302–3; Clifton Crais, *The Politics of Evil: Magic, State Power, and the Political Imagination in South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 125; and Guy, *Maphumulo Uprising*, esp. 227 ff., for this case; and Nokuthula Peace Cele, “Building a Community on the Zulu Frontier: The History of the Machi Chieftaincy from the Early 19th Century to 1948,” Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, History 2006, “Introduction”; and Yale, C. T. Loram papers, “The Education of Backward Peoples, a Suggested Program,” Box 1, Sec. 1, thanks to Greg Nelson.

⁷⁵ “Messiah”: Absolom Vilakazi, with B. Mthethwa and M. Mpanza, *Shembe: The Revitalization of African Society* (Johannesburg: Skotaville Press, 1986), 28–30, cited by Patrick Harries, “Symbolism and Tradition in a South African Bantustan: Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Inkatha, and Zulu History,” *History and Theory*, 32, 4 (December 1993), 111; and Absolom Vilakazi, “Isonto LamaNazareth: The Church of the Nazarithes,” M.A. Thesis, Hartford Seminary, 1954, 110–11; Elizabeth Gunner, *The Man of Heaven and the Beautiful Ones of God* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 23.

personally, like Jesus, had died and risen again while still a youth. According to his church's lore, he was redeemed, and resuscitated from death, by the simultaneous death of a favorite ox.⁷⁶ Shembe eschewed individual ancestors as objects of address, but he peppered his most popular hymns with their names: his people were the "sons of Dinga'an." Like a chief, he founded for his people their own territory, albeit a limited one, the "Nazarite" center of Ekuphakameni.

Shembe not only channeled chiefship but he also amplified and echoed claims of common-man Zuluness within it. His first direct, divine communication came as he stole fruit from a European-owned orchard, revealing – through his agency – a great ancestor and so God (*unkulunkulu*) who "hears what men say." His first rebuke from this God came after he took a simple leather belt from a black working man. Taking from the fruits of the land brought God to bear as his protector; taking from one of his fellows brought God's censure. This was the ancestral definition of justice that missionaries had sought to breach. After his baptism by the traveling pastor William Leshega, Shembe was struck by lightning, as if part of his cosmic training: in the Nazarite church's records this is "kwaduma izulu," or "there thundered a lightning bolt." In other of his church's testimonies, lightning came from his acolytes' finger tips as a manifestation of their holiness.⁷⁷

Shembe's organization helped spread Zuluness – regardless of whether Shembe was "a Zulu" by birth – by extolling Zulu culture, in his home grown Christian idiom. Alongside his church, other organizations, Apostolic, "Zion-style," and further independent African-led churches pullulated over the towns and villages of the Union of South Africa, with thirty or more independent church groups extant by 1910, and a hundred multicongregational churches a decade later – soon more.⁷⁸ Only ten years after Loram recommended Christianity to cure the Zulu tribe of its evils, Vryheid Christians identified themselves as "hardly without exception Zulus." There were now Christian Zulus, something hardly possible in years past. Zulu was no longer a political affiliation. Already at Chief Dinuzulu's funeral (in 1913), it was "customary," as in modern Christian burials, for the heir to "turn the first sod" into the grave – but with his assegai!⁷⁹

Scholars today catalogue Shembe's church of this time as an "AIC," an "African Independent Church," a label preferred especially by modern sociology and "missiology." Both secular and Christian academic scholarship tend to

⁷⁶ Robert Papini, "Carl Faye's Transcript of Isaiah Shembe's Testimony of His Early Life and Calling," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 29, 3 (1999), 265. William Leshega baptized Shembe on 22/7/06.

⁷⁷ Papini, "Carl Faye," 271–3; my italics.

⁷⁸ Martin West, *Bishops and Prophets in a Black City: African Independent Churches in Soweto, Johannesburg* (Cape Town, London: David Phillip, Rex Collins, 1975), 2.

⁷⁹ Cope, *To Bind the Nation*, 38; Paul la Hausse de Lalouvière, *Restless Identities: Signatures of Nationalism, Zulu Ethnicity and History in the Lives of Petros Lamula (c. 1881–1948) and Lymon Maling (1889–c.1936)* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2000), 16.

judge AICs as innately positive developments. AICs are seen in elevated terms, as symbolical theaters or places to perform wellness, and as centers for social networks. They are lauded for their provision of “religious fulfillment” and their affirmation of their members’ humanity, their good works, their care for the infirm. AICS helped root joiners in *place*, they offered a form of “home” if there were no other, an emotionally accessible niche for people in recovery from trauma – such as being displaced from ancestral land.⁸⁰ Not only Shembe’s church but also most new churches also gave comfort to the physically ill. Tuberculosis, infertility, and mining work injuries, as well as abandonment and widowhood, all drove people to prophetic healers and longer term church memberships. They helped make AICs their congregations.⁸¹

The AICs also represented a variety of the most traditional kind of town-based power in peacetime: women’s everyday collective decision making. AICs differed one from the next: there were large prophet-centered, Zion-style, “water churches,” sacralizing water and ash, and fervent, even ecstatic, small-group prayer sessions. Almost every service, however, featured individual women’s public discourse, possession, glossolalia, and confession, interspersed with men’s-and-women’s orchestrated behavior: singing hymns, bowing in silence, listening to the preacher. Prominent women played the most prominent roles in the churches. They gave pace and direction to services, and they could dictate content by selectively interrupting the service. Neither prophet nor preacher – nor employers – could deflect them.

Outside prayers, churchwomen negotiated solidarities and produced insurance and self-help organizations, from burial societies to Bible groups. The healing-church AICs began to outpace other churches in numbers of members, leaving the African Methodist Episcopal church and its breakaways behind. They also, most of them, eschewed this-worldly action. After a little wavering, Shembe’s church explicitly disavowed politics, swearing fidelity to the Segregationist government.⁸²

⁸⁰ Comaroff, *Body of Power*; James Kiernan’s articles are invaluable for Zulu Zionism, e.g., “Prophet and Preacher: An Essential Partnership in the Work of Zion,” *Man*, n.s., 3 (1976), 356–66, and “The Work of Zion: An Analysis of an African Zionist Ritual,” *Africa* 46, 4 (1976), 34–55.

⁸¹ Tuberculosis Commission, *First Report of the Tuberculosis Commission* (Cape Town: Union of South Africa, Government Printer, 1912); Native Affairs Commission, *Report of the Native Affairs Commission for the Year 1910* (Cape Town: Union of South Africa, Government Printer, 1911); John M. Janzen, with William Arkininstall, *The Quest for Therapy in Lower Zaire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982); Steven Feierman and John M. Janzen, “Introduction,” in Steven Feierman and John M. Janzen, eds., *The Social Basis of Health and Healing in Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); and Julie Livingston, *Debility and the Moral Imagination in Botswana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 184 ff., on “Digole.”

⁸² Papini, “Carl Faye.” Almost alone among activist scholars, Phil Bonner has suggested that this kind of popular Christianity in urban centers militated against a more effective kind of political organization in the 1920s, in Bonner, “Division and Unity in the Struggle: African Politics on the Witwatersrand in the 1920s” (Johannesburg, [Unknown publisher], 1992).

TRIBES QUA TRIBES

Chiefs became administration employees in South Africa. Even in the “protected” chiefdoms of Bechuanaland and Basutoland (Lesotho), the “chief” would thenceforth be charged with managing (and slowing down) peasants’ proletarianization, safeguarding minimal circuits of self-sufficiency in the countryside and incrementalizing the process of political destruction around them. Sometimes, however, chiefs petitioned for recognition, autonomy, and land, as rightful leaders of tribes. One such in the 1910s came in the vicinity of Shembe’s childhood neighborhood in the Harrismith district. The chief there was Mopeli (*mopedi*), the crocodile kinsman of Moshoeshoe. Mopeli had, since 1867, maintained some autonomy as a leader over contiguous highveld settlements, but as he lost relevance to their future, his people began identifying themselves differently, as “people of Kgolokwe” (or “Khulukwe” or “BaKhulukwe”), one of Gustav Fritsch’s component ethnicities listed for Basuto. Ancient chief Khulukwe received the burden of an authentic or tribal identity, advanced in opposition to the collaborationist ruler.

In 1911, the “Bakhulukwe” claimed to be 25,000 people in all and to own the Districts Vrede and Harrismith, amounting to over 5,000 square kilometers. Edward Dower, the Secretary for Native Affairs, prepared a potted history for the Governor General, oriented around the question of whether they were really a tribe. He noted that the name “Bakhulukwe” was mentioned by George W. Stow, in his *Native Races of South Africa*, as a “branch of the Baputi.” Their petition emphasized patriarchal rights, military service, and the possession of some records of purchase for land, but Dower summarized it thus: “The Amahlubi fleeing before Chaka’s [Shaka’s] armies drove out the Batlokwa; but being in turn defeated by combined Basuto and Mantiti [*sic*] tribes they broke up – some returning to Natal and others crossing over to Cape territory ... [the Bakhulukwe] are probably remnants of the Amahlubi who remained in the Free State.”⁸³ Then, according to Dower, they submitted to Moshoeshoe and were “absorbed into the Basuto Nation, ... [and] from that moment ceased to be a separate tribe.” Being defined as a fragment or remnant of something else, before being subordinated, was not a good sign, and their petitions were rejected.

The people calling themselves “Tlokwa” or “Batlokwa” also petitioned the NAD for recognition and for land. They tried to root their origins in chief Moletsane’s people, who so persecuted Sefunelo, and in Sekonyela’s people, the remnants of the people of MmaNtathisi. For genealogists the argument was not strong. The idea of the chief as lion (*tau*) familiar to “Tlokwa” antiquarians worked especially against the ethnic grain, as men were related under such a sign by virtue of fighting together. There was no clearly delineated Batlokwa

⁸³ G. W. Stow, *The Native Races of South Africa* (Cape Town: Sonnenschein, 1905); SAB GG 50/64, Charles Garnett to Viscount Gladstone, Governor General, 13/11/11 (“something substantial [should be] done for the tribes”) and Dower to same, 20/3/11, cover for “Claim of the Batlokoa and Bakhulukwe to land in the Orange Free State.” My full stop replaces ellipsis.

chiefship, nor a predominance of “Tlokwa clans” among the people; there were more “forgotten clans,” as one headman put it. The petitioners claimed Witsieshoek, just northeast of Lesotho’s border. At the same time there were “Batlokwa” everywhere in South Africa, only 10 or 20 percent of them residing in the requested area. The petitioners itemized other arguments, touting for instance the desire of “Members of the Tribe holding responsible positions in the TRIBE” [*sic*] to purchase further land from the government. The answer was no.⁸⁴

“The BaK hulukwe” made another effort in 1915. In the context of World War I, they stressed their pro-imperial bona fides and natural orientation toward Britain. They reformed as a committee – a Church-style group – with a “Secretary of the Bakhulukwe people,” a treasurer and assistant secretary, and so forth. Their elderly chiefs invited the British Governor General to a ceremonial display of their loyalty, and then surprised him with a rehearsed litany of complaints. J. T. Gumede, “Secretary, Bakhulukwe Tribe of Basutos in the Orange Free State,” made their case: the “tribe,” as an aboriginal component of Basuto, deserved “an Area of Land upon which they may be allowed to reside in perpetuity,” farmlands to call their own. But the Basuto were now themselves a tribe, and the answer was again no.⁸⁵

Movements behind chiefs or strategic definitions of tribes failed. Those of professedly religious inspiration grew. In fact, there was in this era a general upsurge in popular mobilizations on just this side of the permissible. On the highveld, they include the peasants under Samuel Moroka, and Samuel’s “Griqua” contemporary, the Reverend and chief A. A. S. le Fleur, and the International Commercial Workers’ Union (ICU) movement. The lesser known Samuelites’ twentieth-century mobilization is considered in this wider context, below.

THE SAMUELITES’ SEARCH FOR LAND

After the South African War scuttled the Samuelites’ plan to collect thousands of citizens in Tati District, Samuel and his allies in the Bogachu court looked for a way out of Tati. For a time, the Transvaal seemed like a promising alternative, especially the Rustenberg District, as it had seemed to chiefs in the previous century. Rustenberg was part of the old *ha-rotse* territory taken by people-of-Tebele (Matebele) and then coveted by missionaries, self-called Bastards, Griqua, “Bahurutshe,” and Barolong. In some parts of the

⁸⁴ Especially the purchasers would be “NTSEBENG MOLOI a woman [*sic*], [grand]daughter of the late CHIEF WITZIE,” SAB GG 50/64, Gumede to Governor General, 24/6/15, and T. Quinlan, “The Tribal Paradigm and Ethnic Nationalism: A Case Study of Political Structures in Qwaqwa,” *Transformations*, 2 (1986), 31–49. SAB NTS 7601 13/328 – Walter Mattita (copy Charles N. Mopeli to Secretary Native Affairs Department, Pretoria, Witsieshoek, 14/1/25); and see Leslie Bank, “The Failure of Ethnic Nationalism: Land, Power and the Politics of Clanship on the South African Highveld, 1860–1990,” *Africa*, 65, 4 (1995), 569.

⁸⁵ In 1925, the government recognized the claims of a “Batlokwa” chief, Koos Mota, at Witsieshoek’s “native reserve”: Leslie Bank, “The Failure.”

Transvaal, peasants were pressed into sharecropping arrangements for the very first time only in the new century. In some places they found themselves resituated in massive, low-rent, feudal enterprises. This was the situation in the Vereeniging Estates, under the “European Investment” company, run by the Jewish British tycoon, Samuel Marks. Marks owned 32,000 acres and said he needed tens of thousands of workers to farm cash crops such as maize and tobacco, and especially, to mine coal for him. In 1905 he asked Lord Selbourne and the Colonial Office whether he could get Samuel Moroka and his people to live on his land, with Marks himself presiding as their governor and patriarch.⁸⁶

For a time this was the plan. After Milner’s failure to attract substantial British settlement, here were many thousands of imperial subjects apparently ready to colonize the Transvaal countryside. The Bechuanaland Protectorate administration, in the person of Major F. W. Panzera, stayed in close touch with Lord Selbourne. They would allow Samuel and his people, whoever they might turn out to be, to leave Tati and go to the Transvaal collieries. A massive people-moving commercial arrangement was afoot – comparable to the contemporary deal for “Shangaan” mining laborers from Portuguese East Africa.⁸⁷ Panzera told Selbourne that Samuel was “loyal,” and Samuel wrote that his father, Chief Moroka, had schooled him in English because he wanted him to be an Imperial chief. Samuel “explained” that this was also why Sir George Grey gave his Chief Moroka, “an English gray stallion, a cart, and a revolver.”⁸⁸

Unfortunately, the colonial bureaucracy, as it often did, turned against itself in a spasm of ill-coordinated commands, reversing course severally, until progress was no longer possible. The British Resident Commissioner of Basutoland, Sir Godfrey Lagden, was said to have witnessed Tshipinare’s mutilated corpse, and he objected to Samuel’s chiefship; also, he had just become chair of the South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC) in 1905 and had published his view that Africans needed to be weaned from their reliance

⁸⁶ SABNTS 306 1/54, Lagden to Lieutenant Governor, 31/8/06; Keegan, *Rural Transformations*, 59; Jeremy Krikler, *Revolution from Above, Rebellion from Below: The Agrarian Transvaal at the Turn of the Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 30 ff.; and Cape Town, Samuel Marks Papers (SMP), B2.22, Johannesburg, Marks to Lewis, 3/8/04, 3/16/04, 3/25/04; Richard Mendelsohn, *Sammy Marks, the Uncrowned King of the Transvaal* (Cape Town: David Philip and Ohio University Press, 1991); Stanley Trapido, “A History of Tenant Production on the Vereeniging Estates, 1896–1920,” in Stan Trapido, William Beinart, and Peter Delius, eds., *Putting a Plough to the Ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa, 1850–1930* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1986); and Maynard Swanson, “The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and Urban Native Policy in the Cape Colony, 1900–1909,” *Journal of African History*, 18 (1977), 187–410.

⁸⁷ Patrick Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity: Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, 1860–1910* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1994).

⁸⁸ University of Cape Town, Kaplan Centre, Samuel Marks Papers (SMP), B.5, Dormer to Marks, 13/7/10; A. Selbourne to Samuel Marks, 18/12/06, 31/11/06; Mendelsohn, *Sammy Marks*, 147, 169, 150. BNA RC 8/5 SM to Acting Lieutenant Governor H. F. Wilson, Bloemfontein, 6/2/04.

on the land.⁸⁹ In contrast, Selbourne tried to salvage something of the Marks plan and voted to (re)admit to South Africa “the members of the tribe,” with this crucial stipulation: Samuel himself was to be excluded along with his people’s cattle.⁹⁰ The solution, which concretely conceived the petitioning body as a tribe, failed to pass muster.⁹¹

In the Tati District, Samuel followed his own cattle to alluvial grazing land in the north, and he left a relative or two in charge of his court’s day-to-day affairs.⁹² While Union was being negotiated, his appeals turned into prayers. “Your petitioner, as a British Subject,” Samuel wrote to the High Commissioner in 1908, “[has] availed himself of all psychological moments to pray for permission to return to the country of [my] birth and people.” Righteous authority belonged to the British monarchy, however in flux it was in South Africa at the moment. Samuel finished thus: “in the event of your Lordship being unable to grant this prayer ... submit ... [it] to Lord Elgin, praying that this prayer be laid before His Most Excellent majesty King Edward VII.”⁹³ This “psychological prayer” was translated back to its older form, a beseeching of an actual “great chief,” seeking peace, land, and people united under a just chiefship.

Samuel would have settled for second rank, a junior court in a multicourt alliance, as he took no pains to hide. He and his secretary – most often a member of the Bogac[h]u line – wrote to successful chiefdoms and asked them for an allocation of land, and to live under them. Examples of inter-chief South African diplomacy in Sechuana are not easy to come by; here the response of the people-of-Ngwato chief Khama to Samuel is especially enlightening.

I once wrote a letter asking your elder brother [Tshipinare] to tell me about you. Your brother said you separated with him after the case which you lost at the place-of-the-white-people (*makgoeng*). He did not know what he did that was wrong. I too person-of-rolong am afraid to live with someone who brings cases, serious cases. I also hesitate because you are a preacher but not a preacher of the religion of this country. You are a person of different teaching [or religion: *thuto*]. If you were to come here in this country, just because our religion [*thuto*] is different from yours, that would lead us into problems [*kgang*].⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Legassick, “British Hegemony,” 48.

⁹⁰ SAB NTS 306 1/54, Panzera to Rodwell, 26/11/06; and Secretary Native Affairs Department to Acting Lieutenant Governor, 11/12/06; Selbourne to Duncan, Johannesburg, 22/12/06.

⁹¹ SMP, B2.26, Marks to Lewis, 7/3/07; 1/2/07, and see B 25-A; 14/6/07; 8/10/08; 13/2/10; B2.35, 29/6/11; and B2-28 A, encl., Selbourne to Marks, 31/1/07.

⁹² BNA, Schapera Papers, “Native Land Tenure in Tati,” notes; BNA, DCF 7/14: Proclamation 2 of 1911.

⁹³ BNA RC 8/5, Samuel L. Moroka to High Commissioner, Francistown, 26/4/08. The Free State’s objection to him could only be that they were not *correctly informed*, so Samuel charged that his message had been illegally seized by the postmaster (Cameron).

⁹⁴ Serowe, Botswana, Khama III Memorial Museum (KIII M), Khama III outgoing letters, “Person of *rolong*” is translated by me here from “Morolong” (“... I am not saying I hate you, you are still my friend. God may help you, Sir. Greetings, It is I, Khama a Segkoma”), Serowe, 12/8/11.

Khama told Samuel to remain out by the Shashi River in Tati.

The land situation for highveld people grew even worse in 1913 with the passage of the Natives' Land Act. Already in the Free State, no "Coloured person" aside from pastors could travel without a white master, or a proxy document, even *within a single district*, and he could be arrested as a vagrant and "put on contract" at once if found in violation. The 1913 Natives' Land Act restricted the recognition of Native-owned land, meaning "tribal" land, to 8.2 percent of the country, and even more important, it forbade sharecropping in the Free State. Many highveld people then had "nowhere to go" and were compelled into less favorable productive relations, or criminalized vagrancy.⁹⁵

The Land Act also disposed Barolong toward Samuel, and Samuel responded by accelerating his efforts to purchase land. He now looked to the Tati Company to change his status from renter to owner and to let him buy land outright in the area of his first settlement, around Matsiloje.⁹⁶ Any and all subscribers with a historical connection to Thaba Nchu, claimed or recalled, were to come forward and pay into a single fund, the Barolong Land Settlement Fund.

Immediately there were difficulties. The government lifted its clerical restrictions on AME pastors, after which, as has been noted, more and more schismatic AICs appeared; but political campaigners were not permitted to travel about. Timothy K. Bogachu of the Bogachu court circulated a petition that Samuel be allowed to return to the Orange Free State to raise awareness and money for the purchase scheme.⁹⁷ Fifty notables signed, but the administration was unmoved. Kept outside South Africa in exile, Samuel relied on surrogates and local standard-bearers. They signed up migrants in Kimberley, for instance, using a questionnaire asking men to list themselves and all their household's possessions, including their herds. This information was to be sent to the "Committee of Chief Samuel Moroka at Bloemfontein," or Samuel's headmen.⁹⁸

Simultaneously the Anglican connections nourished at Canterbury wrought a last favor. Samuel's predicament came to the attention of a young Anglican priest in Francistown named Walter Lack. Interested in securing his own landed chiefship as a parish or see, Lack expounded the Samuelites' cause, and he was commissioned as Samuelite representative by prominent men, including J. D. Goronyane and W. Z. Fenyang, later members and leaders of the African National Congress. With Father Lack's intervention, the

⁹⁵ SAB SNA 481 p. 117 (317 2/0), Pass Laws, Orange Free State, 1910; Solomon Plaatje, *Native Life*, 113, 116; Reverend G. C. Day, "Thaba Nchu Feelings," *The Barolong* (CPSA publication), November 1913.

⁹⁶ The idea of buying outside the Union of South Africa had been suggested to Samuel by Lord Selbourne in 1910. BNA S.41/4, Dewdney W. Drew, Pretoria Club, to Lord Selbourne, High Commissioner, 1/5/1910.

⁹⁷ Bloemfontein, CGM, Anglican Church records: Baptisms; the son of Josiah Bogachu, who was the son of Bogachu.

⁹⁸ SAB NTS 306 1/54, "Moroka," "Circular," in Sechuana.

Tati Company negotiated to sell Samuel a great stretch of territory. The three blocks of land, priced six shillings (A), seven shillings and sixpence (B), and ten shillings (C) per acre, were together initially estimated at 237,000 acres; the total was corrected later to 202,041 acres. The three blocks were in the southern half of the territory, composing about a fifth of the whole district, or about half the size of greater Thaba Nchu.⁹⁹

Father Lack traveled all over South Africa raising money for the land fund, speaking mostly to small crowds, side by side with other Samuelites. In helping to work out the details of the collection, however, he arranged for a surplus of 30,000£ sterling to be amassed from people's subscriptions. This was a considerable sum, and was to be put at his own personal disposal, for administrative purposes such as livestock "dipping" and water affairs in the future chiefdom. Lack claimed that Free State Barolong had given him a list of 4,000 names, meaning 4,000 households had pledged to join Samuel in Tati territory, some 20,000 people in all.¹⁰⁰

No doubt aware that people were generally hostile to the government's land policy and taxes, the Bloemfontein "CID" or detectives division sent a detail to observe the Samuelites. The police brought several of them into their office for questioning, and their depositions constitute the source material here. Two trends must be noted. Samuelite committees continued to form under Father Lack's touch even as it became clear that they would very likely not achieve the minimum payment by the first deadline. The Samuelites had to raise 30£ per household head, at once or in increments of 10£ and then 5£ per year. The organizers tried to convene the people to explain the plan's assumptions and caveats, but the law made travel in the countryside difficult, if not impossible. As Samuel said, "my people" are farmhands and "workers" and could not travel about "as they wished," even though "we have been separated thirty years and ... are now scattered over the Free State, Transvaal, and other parts of the Union, some living in town locations, some in Reserves, and others on Farms."¹⁰¹ Subscribers had to be contacted severally and via third parties, guaranteeing that the finer points of the payment scheme were softened or left out.

Major F. W. Panzera said he knew "every inch of the land in question and considered it suitable, and capable of great development ... the lands would become a Tribal Property and could, to all intents and purposes, constitute a new native reserve." As such, it was to be administered by the Bechuanaland

⁹⁹ BNA, DC S. 10/3, and esp. "Agreement of Purchase" and "Deed of Transfer." BNA, S. 10/3, Lack to Acting Assistant Commissioner, Francistown, 3/9/15; S. 10/3, Moroka Land Settlement Advisory Committee meeting, Francistown 23/4/17. For a summary, see Tapela, "Tati District," 152–172. And SAB, GG 1544, etc., post 13/7/15, requesting Lack and "my secretary, William Bogacu," collect subscription payments.

¹⁰⁰ SAB NTS 306 1/54, Walter Lack, "Short Report on the Moroka Land Settlement Scheme," 1916 ("20,400" persons).

¹⁰¹ BNA (Assistant Commissioner Series) AC.5 S/32, Samuel Moroka to Resident Commissioner, Bechuanaland Protectorate, Mafeking, 23/12/15.

Protectorate. The Protectorate only mandated that the Tati Company recognize a "Native Reserve," apart from European-owned farms, in 1911; it was to be held under imperial oversight. So might the Samuelites' new lands. Panzera then remarked, as if it were a small matter, that the territory could support cattle in the order of 10,000, not the 50,000 head that Samuelite Barolong apparently possessed. He nonetheless "strongly recommend[ed] the arrangement." The High Commissioner in Cape Town should "only" insist that Samuel pay Bechuanaland Protectorate taxes on top of any commercial payments to the Company.

For a short time collections peaked above expenditures, and South Africans began to make their way to Tati District.¹⁰² Secretary of Native Affairs Edward Dower was alerted to the plan only then, when streams of people were already arriving, in 1915. Dower too complained that 50,000 heads of cattle, not 10,000, were on the move, but he also supported the process. In his mind, the plan became "to transfer the whole of the Barolong Tribe resident in the Union to the Bechuanaland Protectorate." Conceived this grandly, it had to proceed.¹⁰³ Most of all, in Dower's estimation, the "Native" had to be protected from Boer landlords, and the Samuelite trek did that. Privately, Dower expressed deep distaste for the way relations of production on the farms had developed, complaining especially that the "middling Boer" had reduced to serfdom the "better class" of "Native." He took great pleasure in working against the Boers he held responsible.¹⁰⁴ The Samuelites, Dower felt, should be husbanded in safer climes, in the north; there they should reserve their labor for the Greater South Africa still expected to come, as described in the Union of South Africa's founding charter.

When Father Lack held meetings for Samuel in Thaba Nchu, people often arrived in bad humor, complaining that while they wanted to emigrate to join Samuel, they were prevented from doing so. Strapped for cash, many of them lived on farms owned by the beneficiaries of Tshipinare's partition of Thaba Nchu. These Barolong landlords threatened them with immediate eviction if they professed any interest in Samuel. Father Lack played his only card against the landlords at once, a government letter that mentioned his efforts on the Samuelites' behalf. He said anyone who interfered with his "mission" would be "reported to the High Commissioner and be dealt with."

The landlords were shocked that the families living on their farms as clients were being offered freehold land under Samuel Moroka's name, sanctified by

¹⁰² SAB GG 1544 50/505; "H. C. asks Imperial Secretary to forward ..." 50/514, Resident Commissioner Mafeking (Panzera) to High Commissioner, 10/3/15, and Imperial Secretary to Governor General 21/6/15, with Minister's response to Imperial Secretary 50/543, Same to Same, 13/7/15; and SAB NTS 306 1/54, 1916, Short Report on Moroka Land Settlement Scheme.

¹⁰³ SAB NTS 306 1/54, "Circular," in Sechuana.

¹⁰⁴ For Dower and the Native Affairs Department, see Saul Dubow, *Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid in South Africa, 1919–36* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 24, 31, 80, 103; and SAB NTS 306 1/54, Dower to Minister of Native Affairs, Cape Town, 30/3/15; BNA AC 5/32, Assistant Commissioner, Serowe to Resident Commissioner, 23/12/15.

the High Church, at the other end of a train ride. They appealed their case and Secretary Dower quickly reversed himself. He attacked Lack's request for a six-month moratorium on evictions – in effect, to suspend the 1913 Land Act – as naive and “idealistic,” and he described Lack as having “a streak of rashness that has made him enemies.”¹⁰⁵ Panzera, the Bechuana warhorse, considered the propensity of African landholders to bind inferiors to them as a retrograde feature of tribal life on its way to obsolescence. There was “an ancient custom, for instance in the Protectorate,” he said, “for Chiefs to forbid members of their tribe to remove,” one he had squelched in the past (actually he had not). Panzera understood the deal afoot as one that would bring to Bechuanaland an “industrious” tribe, a “civilized” tribe: in his view the cosmopolitan Samuelites would elevate and modernize raw natives living in the bush.

Panzera proposed the expedited transportation of Samuelites from debarcation points along the railway line, but Dower reacted less than enthusiastically. In the event, General Botha ordered Dower directly to tell the railways not to give the Samuelites any discount on their rail fares. In spite of this impediment, around 4,000 individuals – though not 4,000 families – arrived in Tati District in 1915 and 1916, many of them by rail.¹⁰⁶

Observers of the Samuelites' various meetings in South Africa had the sense that “no sacrifice would be too great” among them, but in fact they were slow to pay the Tati Company what they owed. Men gave only a place-holding amount to the Barolong Land Settlement Fund and then proceeded to relocate with their families, heedless of schedules. Samuel's rule, they reasoned, protected them against further outside demands in the form of annual taxes or “dues” – or what was the point?¹⁰⁷ As the balance sheet turned red, people continued to trek from Kimberley, Winberg, Khunwana, Bloemfontein, and elsewhere, heading north via the Old Road, by wagon, or by rail, all going to the Tati District. “Big Native Trek. Free State Seriously Affected,” the Johannesburg *Star* proclaimed. “Many of the best natives are throwing up positions they have held for years and are risking all their savings to take part in this trek.” At root according to the newspaper was a tribe's “wander

¹⁰⁵ BNA, AC 5/33 Acting Assistant Commissioner, Francistown, to Government Secretary, 18/1/17; and see Tapela, “Tati,” 163; SAB NTS 306 1/54, Petition to Resident Magistrate (RM), Thaba Nchu, 2/8/15; RM, Thaba Nchu to Secretary Native Affairs Department, Bloemfontein, 3/8/15; SAB-5 GG 1544, post 13/7/15.

¹⁰⁶ St. Paul's, Thaba Nchu, St. Paul's Methodist Church, Minutes of Leaders' Meetings (MLM) 1915: February 19, 1916.

¹⁰⁷ BNA RC 8/5 Resident Magistrate, Mafeking to Acting Assistant Commissioner, Francistown, 19/6/15. Samuelite meetings transpired in Bloemfontein, Kroonstad, Brandfort, Hopstad, Dewetsdorp, Winberg, Tromsburg, Bethany, Sekameng (Basutoland), and in the Transvaal, Litchberg, Klerksdorp, Johannesburg, and in the Cape, Kimberley. BNA, AC. 5/28, Lack to Resident Commissioner, Mafeking, 21/12/14, Acting Assistant Commissioner, Francistown to Samuel, 2/1/15; S. 10/3, High Commissioner (Buxton) to Milner, Cape Town 23/5/19; SAB, NTS 306, 1/54, Secretary of Native Affairs (SNAD) to Imperial Secretary, Cape Town (IS), 9/5/17, and SNAD to Private Secretary, forwarded to Manager of Railways G. W. Pilkington, 16/5/17, and Pilkington to SNAD, 2/6/17. Hereafter SNAD will be used in these notes.

fever.”¹⁰⁸ On February 5, 1915, at a large meeting in Kimberley, Father Lack and “Piet Boze,” a “Barolong native” residing in the Winberg native location, passed around a collection jar “to which I [Simon Kolobe, a police witness] myself subscribed 2/6d.” While some continued to move to Tati, others said that “the natives” were going “to get Thaba Nchu back again for themselves, with the assistance of a white man who resides in Bechuanaland.”¹⁰⁹

Still focused on Tati, Father Lack had taken to calling the land purchase idea “an experiment.”¹¹⁰ Well might he say so, as many of the people who immigrated there perished miserably. Some developed swollen limbs and malarial fevers on the journey. Those who came by train often fared no better than those who rode in wagons. It was unusually cold in August, September, and October, 1916, and the pneumonic third class cars were unheated. The trains disgorged their passengers at the rail yard in the open veld near Francistown. Parents were hungry, there was no milk for the children. In Bloemfontein the police caught wind of “rumoured unrest” among Barolong and “Cape boys” referencing the Samuelite migration. The imperial medical inspector then closed the border in May of 1917, ostensibly because of an occurrence of bubonic plague in the Free State.¹¹¹ The Barolong landowners, as they had promised, kicked out their Samuelite tenants, who were forced to sell their cattle at bargain rates just to survive.¹¹² It is possible that 600 households were rendered destitute and homeless in this way, before their harvest, having prepared to leave only after they had reaped.¹¹³

Even before the Spanish Influenza devastated Tati in 1918, there were, among the lean-tos and half-finished rondavels, three or four deaths on some days.¹¹⁴ When Police Captain G. E. Nettleton brought up the mortality issue

¹⁰⁸ They “sell all they possess at a sacrifice in order to respond to the call of their chief. All classes of natives are moving ...” both quotes, clipping from the *Star* (Johannesburg), “Big Native Trek Free State Seriously Affected,” date missing, probably 1915, BNA S.10/3.

¹⁰⁹ The police surveillance of the Samuelites during the Great War called their meetings “innocent and tedious” in character. BNA RC 8/5 Resident Commissioner Mafeking to Acting Assistant Commissioner, Francistown, 19/6/15; 19/4/15; 29/1/15 (Simon Kolobe affidavit).

¹¹⁰ BNA S.10/3 26–9 /17, Assistant Commissioner to Acting Assistant Commissioner (AAC) Francistown, and Walter Lack to AAC, Francistown, 3/9/15.

¹¹¹ Dower had already asked the railways not to offer the Samuelites a special rate in 1915: SAB NTS 306 1/54, SNAD (Edward Dower) to G. W. Pilkington, office of the General Manager of the Railways, Cape Town, 28/6/15; 6/5/17; SNAD to IS, 9/5/17; Pilkington to SNAD, 21/5/17; the rate was set at ½ d/head/mile, an exorbitant fare; and further correspondence, 10/11/15; 10/5/16; 2/6/17; 8/6/17.

¹¹² BNA, AC 5/32 AAC, Francistown to Samuel, 24/4/17. Typhus and malaria in Tati were also cited as reasons for keeping the border closed. And BNA S.10/3 Resident Commissioner (RC), Mafeking to High Commissioner (HC), Cape Town, 4/11/20; Tati Company to RC, 10/7/19; RC to H C, 2/18/19.

¹¹³ BNA S.10/3, Lack to Under Secretary for Native Affairs, n.d.

¹¹⁴ BNA, AC 5/32 Medical Officer Dr. MacRae’s “Report on Investigation of Causes of Mortality at Moroka’s Village, Matsiloje, Northern Protectorate,” 21/5/17; BNA, S. 1/3, HC (Buxton) to Alfred Milner, Cape Town, 23/5/19; and WITS, CPSA AB 2259 E30.1, Thaba Nchu, St. Augustine [Mission]’s Log Book, 1917–25, entries for 1918.

in a meeting with the headmen, no one rose to speak, save a single complainant who was at once shouted down to silence. The others said they would “join [Samuel] Moroka whether they die or not.”¹¹⁵ When Lack asked David Monametsi (Waterman) whether he wished to return to the Free State given the terrible conditions at Matsiloje, he said no. “I told Mr. Lack that it is said that [when] some of Moses’ followers who were with him on his journey and left him returned back from where they came from, they died on the veldt and were devoured by wild beasts.”¹¹⁶ Monametsi’s paternal ancestor and namesake had been among the first highveld men to recite the names of the Jewish kings. Now he stressed his own fealty to Samuel by likening him to Moses. Finally, Father Lack quit. “I could not bring any more people to live in the way I see these people living,” he said. Not only was he disappointed with their industry in building their new community. The people also disrespected him, he felt, installing him in a *Scherm* (mat hut), such that he was “living like a Mosarwa” (or Bushman).¹¹⁷

Pending the eventual “reopening” of the border, the Tati Company sold its main mine and extended the payment deadlines. They announced this from their position on the redesigned Moroka Land Committee, appointed there by the indomitable Major Panzera. In effect, the Company agreed to collect unrefundable money for as long as possible, after which the Samuelites would, the Company reasoned, default, and revert to being renters. A trickle of migration continued in this context.¹¹⁸

THE YOUNGMEN OF THE 1920S

After five years of Samuel’s agents “stirring up trouble” about the Tati land purchase, the scheme had failed, and the magistrate at Thaba Nchu warned the Native Affairs Department that Thaba Nchu was ripe for an explosion. A temporary and perhaps accidental go-ahead for Samuel to visit the Union

¹¹⁵ BNA DCS 10/3, Tati Co. to AAC, Francistown, 16/10/15; District Commissioner, Serowe (Nettleton) to Government Secretary (GS), Mafeking, 25/5/18. Sixty-two women were widowed in this period, many prevented from entering the Orange Free State and forced to remain with their husbands’ extended families. In Thaba Nchu during the 1918 flu, for every thousand persons, nineteen died; in Matsiloje the figure was much higher; BNA, AC 5/33 AAC, Francistown to GS, Mafeking, 18/1/18; BNA, PMO, BP Government Secretary, 15/4/18.

¹¹⁶ BNA, AC 5/33, Moroka Land Settlement Advisory Committee to Resident Commissioner, Francistown 18/7/18. 170 bags of grain were shipped to Matsiloje in 1922–23, some eventually repaid. BNA S 10/4/1, AAC (Butler), Francistown to GS, Mafeking, 17/1/18; BNA, S. 5/2, Acting Resident Magistrate (ARM), Francistown, to GS, 29/6/22, 17/10/22, 4/11/22, 3/1/23, 8/3/23 (“swollen limbs”), Acting GS to ARM, Francistown, 8/7/22, 15/5/23; RM, Francistown, to GS, 3/11/24, 29/11/24.

¹¹⁷ BNA S 10/4/1, “Statements taken in Moroka’s Stadt in October, 1917.”

¹¹⁸ Those with more than 10£ owed to the land fund were further taxed, BNA S.10/3, Tati Company to Resident Commissioner, Mafeking, 10/7/19; Francistown Museum, “Report on the Ranch; Sale of Monarch Mine,” July 10, 1919 (reprint from *Financial Times* of London, same year).

in search of funds, issued by Prime Minister Smuts, was only rescinded at the last moment. Fresh rumors flashed about as they had in the past: that “Samuel was coming,” that Tshipinare’s people would be rounded up and executed, that angry Samuelites were coming down from Seliba Reserve to the north of Thaba Nchu town, armed and on horseback, at any moment.¹¹⁹

In fact, in the Magistrate’s considered view, “more than half” the people in and around Thaba Nchu believed that Samuel was to be appointed chief, “with full powers.” What this might mean, in the rural slum that greater Thaba Nchu had become, was far from apparent. One might surmise that another world was imagined to be waiting to take its place, a Kingdom of A/ancestor on earth. In faraway Tati District, one sees signs of the same trend toward inchoate meaning, toward expectations of a triumphant and imminent return, or a miraculous restoration of rights in land. And within these developments the highveld’s popular political traditions persisted.

As the rains did not come in 1922, the Protectorate government released hundreds of bags of grain from the “police warehouse” to the Tati District’s inhabitants to alleviate an impending famine.¹²⁰ Samuel left Matsiloje a second time and went back to live up in the Tati Native Reserve with his cattle. A “Moroka’s Youngmen Advisory Council” arose in Matsiloje, associated with a cohort of men circumcised together back at Thaba Nchu around 1905. They were known as the *Magasa* (“the Sowers”), or “the Youngmen,” and were said to have their own court (*lekhotla ... ya ga Magasa*). The Youngmen participated in “drilling” with “specimen rifles” on the weekends. “Our sons are the Magasa Regiment,” said a counselor, “and their leader [is] William Bogachu.” William was thirty-two; the Youngmen were adults, and some of them had been to the mines for a season or more. William was a schoolteacher for the Anglican church and had traveled with a merchant and then on Samuel’s behalf, after Father Lack endorsed his application for a pass exemption.¹²¹ Not all the Youngmen had gone to live in Tati; some of them still dwelt in Thaba Nchu.

Surely the Youngmen were a 1920s instantiation of a ranked men’s alliance, mobilizing to challenge or buttress existing chiefly authority.¹²² Impatient with the situation, facing Tati’s struggling farmers, they were ready to act in

¹¹⁹ SAB NTS 306 1/54, SNAD: Prime Minister to SNAD, 31/12/19, and Resident Magistrate (RM), Thaba Nchu to SNAD n.d., and RM, Thaba Nchu to SNAD, 3/2/23; and latterly, Same to Same, 7/5/20.

¹²⁰ Previous note, and SAB NTS 306 1/54, Assistant Resident Magistrate (Brandfort) to SNAD, 14/6/16; BNA S.5/2, Acting Resident Magistrate, Francistown (Daniel) to Government Secretary, 29/6/22, and Same to Resident Magistrate, Francistown, and to Acting Government Secretary, 8/7/22 and 17/10/22, and to Government Secretary, Mafeking, 4/11/22, 3/1/23, and 8/3/23.

¹²¹ SAB NTS 306 1/54, Lack to SNAD, Bloemfontein, 30/8/15 and 24/6/16.

¹²² SAB, NTS 306 1/54, Walter Lack to Native Affairs Department, Pretoria, Bloemfontein, 3/8/15; St. Paul’s, MLM 1915, 1/11/23; cf. the situation in Natal, Thomas McClendon, *Genders and Generations Apart: Labor Tenants and Customary Law in Segregation-Era South Africa, 1920s to 1940s* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2002).

Samuel's name.¹²³ Their "Advisory Council" complained to Samuel that "the tribe was scattered and he should get land for us Barolong." In November of 1923, Samuel received the Youngmen (and William Bogachu) in person, in a rare audience. They complained that "As he was unable to procure land, he was asked to try & obtain some at THABACU [Thaba Nchu]." This was their desire: they wanted Samuel to lead them back to Thaba Nchu. "All the Barolongs accepted the Mogasa [*sic*] Regiment's grievance," they added.¹²⁴ One John Boom would head a committee to facilitate the return to Thaba Nchu, to which they asked Samuel to lend his support.

At or near this juncture, two more power centers coalesced. First, the Youngmen of Thaba Nchu initiated *their* sons and younger brothers, on a rare farm owned outright by a Thaba Nchu Samuelite, a Mr. Ramagaga, recreating and confirming the order they wished to build. Next, James or John O. Kehiloe, a tailor from Bloemfontein, formed a committee in Thaba Nchu. On it were Reetsang Mathlare and Samuel G. Mokgothu, both senior Samuelites. While formally beholden to the Youngmen of Thaba Nchu and Matsiloje, the committee operated independently, and it came into conflict with the still extant Barolong Land Fund, which had been soliciting money for Samuel's private "purse." When Samuel petitioned the government to allow him to visit South Africa to view his father's grave, then for a surgical operation to have cataracts removed, the Resident Magistrate at Thaba Nchu inquired whether "leading men" wished Samuel to visit the town when he was in the country. Despite the existence of the new committee, the judge was assured that they did not. In particular, W. Z. Fenyang had now come to oppose Samuel outright, and J. D. Goronyane, the de facto headman and a leading Christian landowner, was only a bit more circumspect.¹²⁵

Around the same time, a group of "children" in Tati District, of the same generation that was circumcised at Ramagaga's place in the Free State, began to behave oddly. They spent an inordinate time praying out on the veld and refused to participate in social life. They are recalled as singing together, in 1923, over and over again:

I hear my Helper,
He has called me, I am following him;
Truly He has called me there,
I believe, and I will follow him.

Who would this helper be? Where would they be permitted to go? *They* were not circumcised, and not ranked. Their pastor, Moses Mfazi (who had been

¹²³ BNA RC 8/5 Moroka Followers, Affairs of. 5/7/24–Matsiloje. "B" S. Moroka. Commotion – Bloemfontein. 5/5/24. "I deny that we had night meetings," they said.

¹²⁴ BNA RC 8/5, "B" S. Moroka, Commotion, as in prev. note.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, and Molema, *Chief Moroka*, 163; BNA, RC 8/5, "Report of Interview" re Baralong [*sic*] Land Settlement Fund, 15/11/24; SAB JRU 1927 Minute 1462, J. B. M. Hertzog to Office of the Prime Minister, 7/6/27.

in Matsiloje from 1919), had been recalled to Tekwani, the Wesleyan station near Plumtree, earlier in the year.¹²⁶ The congregation and the Tati chiefship were left to themselves to provide the answers. Samuel deliberately delayed the Reverend Mfazi's return and stayed at Matsiloje in 1923 for the duration of the crisis and its resolution.

Samuel reportedly asked three kinds of authority to diagnose the situation with the youths: highveld Anglican clergy (a man from Plumtree, and an Anglican priest, most likely Peter Sekgoma, from a place-of-Ngwato dissenting faction); a minister from the AME church in Mafeking; and two of Samuel's favorite headmen, Jeremia Chose and Paul Segopa, who were Methodist lay preachers. Segopa was an especially loyal lieutenant, who in 1918 told the Assistant Commissioner for Francistown that concerning the horrible conditions in the Tati District, "I have not the least complaint. ... I have to die here while living under Moroka."¹²⁷

At first, however, most adults of the Youngmen's generation in Matsiloje and the Tati villages questioned the sanity and morality of the youths' behavior. In the 1920s "Matsiloje acquired a reputation for profligacy ... and [came] to be compared to Sodom and Gomorrah." The same was said of Thaba Nchu's youth behind closed doors by the older churchgoing public. Parents thought their children, especially when they returned from the Rand, had become promiscuous and were veering out of control.¹²⁸ Later marriages meant more frequent transgressions. Deacons' meetings from the First World War and afterward fixated on sexual crimes by teachers and lay preachers. In Tati, the Anglicans summed this up by a phrase retained in some people's memory long afterward, that the afflicted children "were entered by the spirit of pigs and demons."¹²⁹ Pigs had a deep association with Europeans and uncleanness, altogether; demons were spiritized ancestors, restored to prominence as dangerous influences in the discourse of many an independent church.

The Methodists, presumably including the AME, read the children's prayers as a sign of divine intervention. In their midst, a preacher from Bloemfontein, named Harry Morolong, directly espoused the youths' cause. The spirit among them was, he said, the Holy Spirit, not the ancestors. According to Morolong, to prepare for the Coming of what-was-next, the young people had to reform

¹²⁶ Zimbabwe Methodist Mission House (ZMMH), Quarterly minutes of the Native Wesleyan Church, Bulawayo; 30 September 1901; January 7, 1907; January (?) 1917; September 29, 1923.

¹²⁷ See n. 113.

¹²⁸ [The Reverend] G. C. Day, "Thaba Nchu Feelings," writes of "a loss of all self-respect and even of decent shame," in *The Barolong: Quarterly Papers of the Bloemfontein Mission* (see Sources), December 12, 1913; Rachel Frieson, "A History of the Spiritual Healing Church in Botswana," M.A. Thesis, University of Toronto, Toronto School of Theology, 1990, 32, 35 (Jacob Lesabe, one of the afflicted teenagers and a relation of a founding AME member; Jacob Sereetsi).

¹²⁹ Frieson, "History," 37. BNA, AC 5/33, Moroka Land Settlement Advisory Committee to Resident Commissioner, Mafeking, 18/7/18. Mr. Chose (pronounced *tshob-seb*) was a member of one of the original families of Samuelites from the 1870s. BNA, RC 8/5 RM F. to GS, 17/2/28.

their lives, and to do so in their own Methodist church, reconnecting with the older generation.¹³⁰ Morolong and the Methodists, in Pastor Mfazi's absence, accepted the youths' legitimacy and won over chief Samuel. The children were led into the Christian fold and baptized before Mfazi's return. But Harry Morolong conveyed more than this. He said he was sent by God to reveal to them that they would some day "return to Thaba Nchu," and to foretell that "the end times had arrived and that the world was in its death throes." In his formulation, these two ideas became a single whole.¹³¹

Morolong was only one of the many traveling pastors seeking listeners and legitimacy, buoyed by the pastoral exemption in the pass laws, determined to attract novitiates to Christianity. His path intersected at various nodes on the highveld with others, at the diamond mines, the Reef, the Free State towns, "Native" towns and villages, and finally at Matsiloje. As noted, William Bogachu had also travelled before working for Samuel; mobility was itself a means to power. A man named Daniel Kgompini, popularly known as "Gumpie," moved about the countryside as the servant of a white "commercial traveler" and "held meetings [in which he] informs those attending that he is a subject of Chief Samuel Moroka," one witness said, his discussions "being on Religion and Politics badly mixed up."¹³²

Morolong traced his learning and legitimacy to the teachings of Walter Mattita, an Apostolic minister, part of the network of Pentecostal-inspired pastors of the 1920s outlined earlier.¹³³ We know a little about Mattita. The Basutoland establishment church, the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS), made Walter Mattita a preacher and tried to script him, telling him not to dwell so much on the unsavoriness of pigs and tobacco. So Mattita seceded and founded the "Christians of the Holy Spirit" church, soon renamed the "Moshesh Berea Bible Church," laying claim to the whole of Lesotho and the Caledon Valley, as had the PEMS. He also said he possessed, like Isaiah Shembe and many other "prophets," a higher sanction than that of an intermediary: he had died and visited Heaven (and Hell) himself, and then was "risen" to preach the good news. His followers held that Moshoeshoe had rejected the pluralism of Christianity and had in Heaven directly ordered Mattita back to earth "in his name" to make one church for all Basuto.¹³⁴ The police, for their

¹³⁰ St. Paul's, MLM, "Minutes of Meetings," 1914–1915, 1925–1931, i.e., 24/2/15; 4/12/19 (General Minute Book 1919); 13/4/27; 28/7/20; 26/6/29.

¹³¹ Spiritual Healing Church text published in Landau, "The Spirit of God, Pigs and Demons: The 'Samuelites' of Southern Africa," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 29, 3 (1999), 314.

¹³² SAB, JUS 528, 6515/29, "Gumpie" (Kgompini); Captain's report, South African Police, Oudtshoorn, 18/10/21; and BNA, RC 8/5 Samuel Moroka (Bloemfontein), 5/7/24–Matsiloje. "B" S. Moroka. Commotion – Bloemfontein. 5/5/24. Cf. Robert Edgar and Hillary Sapire, *African Apocalypse: The Story of Nontetha Nkwenkwe, a Twentieth-Century South African Prophet* (Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand, 1999).

¹³³ See Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets*; Sundkler, *Zulu Zion and Some Swazi Zionists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

¹³⁴ Martin, *The Biblical Concept of Messianism*, 118 ("in his name"). Mattita retitled his church the "Christian Evangelical Mission Church" before Harry Morolong came into the picture.

part, connected Mattita's church to "the notorious Le Fleur and Hannie ... of the Griqua movement."¹³⁵

Meanwhile John Kehiloe tried to fashion a united voice among reintegrated "Barolong" of all factions, in the name of the old man, Samuel.¹³⁶ He held a large meeting on the 24 May in Bloemfontein in 1924 on the explicit theme of "old feuds forgotten," as the African National Congress's newspaper, *Abantu-Batho*, reported. Kehiloe opened the door again to landlords and other prominent men, and (re)embraced "the young men – the Magasa" who had "strenuously collected" a list of the names of the Samuelite Barolong who wished Samuel to return to Thaba Nchu.¹³⁷ The mobilization of a generational alliance behind a would-be chief was correctly understood by Thaba Nchu landowners as a threat, however, and they declined to participate. The "unity" on offer required their land.

A. A. S. LE FLEUR AND THE GRIQUA MOVEMENT

Let us return for a moment to the middle of the nineteenth century. The fortunes of the Griqua on the western highveld fell into grave decline. In 1860, Adam Kok III led a trek of families from the borderlands all the way across the Maluti range, with Moshoeshoe's permission. (Nicholas Waterboer, Andries' son, stayed in Griquatown.) Kok brought his diminished people down the other side of the mountains into "No Man's Land," ruling there under his Griqua seal, "Lion Rampant" (*Tau*), the chiefly sign of the highveld. The British then laid claim to "Kokstad's" farmlands, subordinated Kok by paying him a salary, and hoisted *their* Lion Rampant. The appointed officers, Joseph Orphen and (Sir) Henry Barkly, allowed the sale of alcohol, against Griqua wishes, and facilitated Griqua men individually to sell off their farms. Settlers bought the land that they could not take, provoking a rebellion in the forests of Mount Currie in 1878.

Andries Abraham Stockenström le Fleur was one of the leaders of the rebels. Le Fleur tried to reverse the decline of the Griqua with a new call for popular mobilization. Le Fleur's father was half French, half Malaysian, and Griqua by association and marriage. Andries recalled his impressions the first time his father took him to visit Kokstad, when he was seventeen. "I [had] imagined home meant *our own people's* place and rule ... [as] the Basuto after the Basuto War was practically a people governing themselves," he said. He had expected "some measure of freedom for my race not a complete wipe out with a wooden God." That wooden God, that false idol, was Chief Constable

¹³⁵ SAB NTS 6605 13/328, J. Henri Bertsch of Paris Evangelical Missionary Society, Morija, 14/6/23.

¹³⁶ Samuel's applications were denied for a final time in 1924, when he was eighty-seven years old. BNA RC 8.5 Resident Commissioner, Serowe (RC-S) to Resident Magistrate, Francistown (RM-F), 17/1/24; RM-F to RC-S, 5/3/24.

¹³⁷ SAB NTS 306 1/54, *Abantu-Batho* (16/10/24), "strenuously undertaken the job of compiling a list of the names of the Barolong of Matsiloye who desire that the chief should return to Thaba Nchu" (my translation).

Demmer, who “pass[ed] down to the [Magistrate’s] Office” before young Le Fleur’s gaze at that moment.¹³⁸ Christianity and Griqua-ness were incompatible with political subordination.

A. A. S. le Fleur married the daughter, Rachel, of the heir-apparent in Kokstad, “Muis” Adam Kok; she had been the resident LMS missionary’s maid. When “Muis” Adam died, Le Fleur came into possession of a colonial staff and other emblems of office and claimed the Griqua chiefship for himself. He also joined the LMS church, lately renamed the “Griqua Independent Church.” From his wheelwright’s workshop at Matatiele, about thirty miles north of Kokstad, Le Fleur denounced the claim of Orphen and Barkly, and so of the Cape government, to own Griqualand East’s territory. In 1897, he announced that people would “get the whole country back” and made contact with other highveld chiefs, and he was arrested. His first night in jail, in Maclear in 1898, Le Fleur awoke “during the night” and found that “three men came in the close[d] cell.” They said they were the same three who had “met father Abraham when he took his son to Mount Moira as an offering to God.”¹³⁹ They bestowed their ancestral blessing on Andries.

Before his prison sentence (according to a “short history” he prepared by his own hand), he had planned to deliver to his supporters a sermon in which we find a version of the basic credo of the statebuilder in South Africa. “In 1624 our forefathers lived in South Africa as heathen under [their] own chiefs,” he wrote, but “our race was a mixed race even then.” They were in his view therefore like “the Jews.” Being of various appearances and backgrounds, in the eyes of God they were one. They had intermarried “with Bantu and Bushmen and got to what we where [*sic*] before the European came here,” participants in their own creation.¹⁴⁰ After the coming of the Dutch, the era of “intermixtures” began in earnest, and they were even more “a mixed race with a chief, the chief of the Namaqua ... Outeniquas ... Korraners ... [etc.]; the mixed race got and took the name Griqua.”¹⁴¹

Le Fleur thus upheld the very sort of Christian Griqua-ness that Robert Moffat had tried to extirpate many decades before. He emphasized chiefs

¹³⁸ Both quotes (my italics): Pretoria, South Africa, University of South Africa (UNISA), E. M. S. le Fleur Collection, A. A. S. le Fleur, Kraaifontein, 30/9/38, “History of,” “13 June 1888–1838.” And for the point to follow: Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

¹³⁹ Robert Edgar and Christopher Saunders, “A. A. S. le Fleur and the Griqua Trek of 1917: Segregation, Self-Help, and Ethnic Identity,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 15, 2 (1982), 205; UNISA, E. M. S. le Fleur Collection, copy of original ms. written at “Breakwater” (the massive Cape Town prison-labor project) 1898, by “the Paramount Chief Andrew [*né* Andries] Abraham Stockenstrom le Fleur the first,” which is “reproduced from Retelgat Vredendal, 2 April 1935.” Annotated “to my wife Rachel (Dorie),” and, “Here I want to leave a Piece of History to be Remembered in the Future.”

¹⁴⁰ The quote in the frontmatter comes from the same set of sentences, in the ellipsis: “... have migrated from the north africa as come across the eastern shores to the South our race was a mixed race even then ...” UNISA, E. M. S. le Fleur Collection, A. A. S. le Fleur, “Short History,” 1896, from his handwritten notes. Full stop added.

¹⁴¹ Le Fleur’s mother’s ethnicity is not known.

(as in his planned sermon, above), and felt himself several times directly in touch with the divine. After serving only six years of a fourteen-year sentence, Le Fleur was released from jail in 1903. Thinking himself amnestied by God, he elevated the religious tenor of his appeal; and though banned from Kokstad, he became a preacher in style and effect. He spent the next decade and more arranging missions to other métis people from his home in District Six, in Cape Town, preaching in his own offshoot church, the Griqua Church, famous for its all-female choirs. In 1917, when he was once again permitted to travel freely, Le Fleur turned back to worldly affairs and formed a plan to raise money from subscribers to buy land in the Karoo. Leading a trek of some 600 people to farms on the Touws River (*Touwsrivier*), north of Cape Town, he was reckoned as a “new Moses who is going to give his people new land and a new form of Government.” The fledgling settlement did not prove viable, and he was arrested and tried for fraud, and exonerated, in 1920.¹⁴²

Again Le Fleur had an epiphany, and he organized a meeting of 800 people in Maitland to adopt a new constitution for the Griqua Church. He would turn back the racial divisions promulgated by missionaries. The moment was later recalled as one in which “God became our God.”¹⁴³ Prior to his trial, le Fleur had worked to protect his followers from the worst laws pertaining to “Natives” or “Kafirs,” taking Griqua as a tribal identity of different vintage.¹⁴⁴ He had, for example, publicly complained of Griqua “mixing freely with the Kafirs and even sleeping” with them in the Oudtshoorn area of the Karoo. Now, however, Le Fleur emphasized that “the country belongs to the Griquas and natives” and not to “the white man.”¹⁴⁵ Renaming the “Griqua Church” the “Griqua National Independent Church of South Africa,” he reached back to the historical openness of Griqua Christianity to “Natives” – such as Barolong – to broaden its appeal.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Edgar and Saunders, “A. A. S. le Fleur,” 220; Henry Bredekamp, “The Le Fleur Family: The Dead Bones of Adam Kok,” 132–55 in Paul Faber, Annari van der Merwe, eds., *Group Portrait South Africa: Nine Family Histories* (Amsterdam and Cape Town: KIT Publishers, Kwela Books, 2003), fashions a story from family lore (including an account from Zoe Wicomb) and oral tradition, and gives 1921 for my 1920; and SAB NTS 7600 4/328, A. A. S. le Fleur to Prime Minister J. B. M. Hertzog, Cape Town 4/5/27.

¹⁴³ SAB NTS 1456 144/214, Griqua Independent Church By-laws, Constitution (1920); UNISA, E. M. S. le Fleur Collection, “Conference Call Easter at Hand,” 1939, notes for a sermon referring to Easter, 1920; and collected in SAB NTS 7600 4/328, clippings of the *Cape Times*, 11/12/20, “Griqua Trek”; 20/11/20, “Coloured Colony”; 23/11/1920, “Griqua Leader in Dock”; 25/11/20, “Trek of the Griquas”; 26/11/20, 27/11/20, “Story of the Griqua Trek,” 1/12/20, “Griqua Trek Case,” and similar, 2/12/20, 3/12/20, 4/12/20, 6/1/21, 29/1/21 (marked 4235/12/1164, as are the following), 23/7/21, “Griqua Trek Case Still Dragging On,” 17/9/21, “The Griqua Trek Case: Trial ...” and appended material.

¹⁴⁴ Edgar and Saunders, “A. A. S. le Fleur,” 208.

¹⁴⁵ UNISA, E. M. S. le Fleur Collection, “Conference Call Easter at Hand,” 1939, notes for a sermon referring to Easter, 1920.

¹⁴⁶ Michael P. Besten, “Transformation and Reconstitution of Khoe-San Identities: A. A. S. le Fleur I, Griqua Identities and Post-Apartheid Khoe-San Revivalism (1894–2004),” Ph.D. dissertation, Univ. of Leiden, 2006 33, 124, 183–6.

As in the past the Griqua church featured its own distinctive rites, sunset baptisms and the like. Its pastors illegally solemnized marriages. Le Fleur's fervent supporters included "Joe Abrams," and "Cornea [*sic*], Darlie Deerning[,] and Makaboa" [Makabua], "[a] Barolong," all of whom were "salved or anointed by Le Fleur," and "dubbed Teachers and Preachers." Le Fleur offered himself as a delegate to a "Native Congress," and in available halls in Cape Town, Kimberley, Fort Beaufort, Kokstad, Mount Ayliff, and elsewhere, he held open meetings. He began to rearticulate the nonracialist and incorporative message characteristic of past rural highveld politics and carried forth by Griqua Christians in the nineteenth century. One local CID sent their "coloured men" to look in on them in a building known as "Le Fleur's church," and were told that services were for members only.¹⁴⁷

Among the core disciples was Martinus Phillip Hannie, who held meetings in which he asked that his hearers "should be one nation." Hannie said "the Colonial Coloured People ... should unite and call themselves the Griqua nation, and after that they should all belong to one church." As the Griqua National Independent Church's meeting-minutes show, Le Fleur noted to his pastorate that "Natives" were "looking for a solution ... in Griqua" (*bij die Grikwa volk*), and he wished to give them one. In 1921, the Griqua church organizer H. J. Fredericks preached that he was to collect "the coloured race" into a vast nation called "the Griqua Independent Nation," which would become "the only recognized Nation in South Africa." The same year three Griqua preachers "held a meeting in conjunction [with] what they termed 'The Black Man.'" ¹⁴⁸ Pastor Makabua complained to the police from Kokstad that after their evening services their people were harassed, as "they say the Barolong and Batlapenis [*batblaping*, fish-place people] are Natives or Kaffers, please try for us to be set free in this tiresome [matter] if you can as we know that the Batlapenis and Barologs are the Griqua."¹⁴⁹

Pastor J. A. Retief, a minister at the Coloured Dutch Reformed Church at De Rust, confronted Abrams, "a preacher of the [Griqua] Church," and engaged Abrams in conversation. Abrams spoke "chiefly on the Bible but he was continually turning off the point." Why was he there in Outdshoorn? "'New houses to be built,'" Abrams said. Why did his people contribute as a *church*, why not "otherwise," by more direct or conventional means? Abrams grew defiant. "It appears to me you are against me, but I will not listen although

¹⁴⁷ SAB JUS 528 6515/29 J. Erasmus, Secretary of African People's Organization, dep. 26/9/21, enclosure in South African Police (SAP), Mossel Bay to SAP Oudtshoorn, 5/10/21; Sgd. M. C. Ackermann, C. C. Constable, Oudtshoorn, 26/8/21.

¹⁴⁸ SAB JUS 528 6515/29, Sgt. V. Westhuizen, Sgt. Claas Klaase, Seg. [*sic*] J. A. Luyt, reports; UNISA EMS le Fleur Collection, "Minutes of Griqua National Independent Church," original in Afrikaans.

¹⁴⁹ *Sic* throughout. UNISA, E. M. S. le Fleur Papers, letters, Peter Makabua, Hawthorn Street, Kokstad, 2/11/1923, with "Christmas Greeting," Griqua Independent Church of South Africa.

the Field Cornet Magistrate, Police or even King George go against me ... you have written down my name, but I am not afraid.”¹⁵⁰

The mobilization of Christian brown-skinned men on nonexclusive grounds was dangerous, their fervor was alarming. The officially recognized Mount Currie headman, de Bruin, told the police le Fleur and his men were not in fact “really” Griqua; but “the Griqua,” wrote Detective Sergeant Broekman, “is such an indefinite breed that it is hard to prove what they are.”¹⁵¹ Another policeman said “the Coloured people call it church, but I don’t; I call it a political meeting.”¹⁵² Predictably, the Griqua Church was “linked” to talk of a “night rising” against Europeans in their beds. Mixtures of Coloureds and Natives were especially troubling to the CID men. Sgt. Broekman observed about seventy Griquas and fifty “natives” mixing indiscriminately on 22 March 1926 at a meeting in a school building. Le Fleur ran a newspaper, the *Griqua and Coloured People’s Opinion*, and published an article about the case of John Mentor, variously identified as “a Hlubi” or “a Barolong,” who won his pass case in court that year by claiming to be a Griqua. Le Fleur continued to discard barriers between métis and Barolong and other highveld people; in “the Griqua church,” several Griqua headmen argued, “Barolongs and Batlapins [*sic*] were christened and married ... [and] had also been officials in the church *and as such regarded as Griquas*.”¹⁵³

Le Fleur tried to create his own reality, his own momentum and legitimacy, in parallel to the government’s static administration of nonwhites. He sometimes handed out pieces of newsprint-like paper as vouchers for people to show “if the magistrate wants to get you in trouble.”¹⁵⁴ To outsiders, this looked like trickery. He and his preachers told Western Cape Karoo audiences they would soon behold a radically altered environment; Sgt. Broekman knew this was not true, and “I am of the opinion that le Fleur and [preacher]

¹⁵⁰ SAB NTS JUS 528 6515/29, District Commissioner, Oudtshoorn, “Meeting convened by Fredericks,” South African Police, De Rust, 15/9/21.

¹⁵¹ SAB NTS 7600 4/328, Vol. 2, Le Fleur; R. Broekman, Detective Sgt., South African Police (SAP), to District Commissioner, SAP (Kokstad Criminal Investigation Department) (CID), 23/3/26, “Suspected Unrest: Le Fleur and His Followers,” and see Besten, “Transformation,” e.g., 115, 123.

¹⁵² SAB JUS 528 6515 – 64/29 William Jacob’s deposition (on Hannie), 24/9/21; and Captain, South African Police (SAP) to Deputy Commissioner, SAP, Cape Town, “Seditious talk Amongst Coloured people at Great Brak River,” and to District Commissioner, no. 5 District, 15/9/21; Deposition by A. Goodwin, 23/9/21.

¹⁵³ *Griqua and Coloured People’s Opinion* (see Sources), March 17, 1926. My *italics*. The headmen said that they had “not seen Barolongs in the church for 20 years,” but this was obviously not so for Le Fleur’s Griqua Independent Church, as we have seen.

¹⁵⁴ Clifton Crais views these as facsimiles of “passes[.] ... the epitome of colonial rule,” and this is true as well; but this model leads further to calling them “endowed with magical properties,” a position I respect, but do not want to espouse (cf. Crais, *The Politics of Evil*, 5, 137), using Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993), i.e., his “surfeit of mimetic power” argument, i.e., 21 ff., and Adam Ashforth, *Madumo, A Man Bewitched* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 16, re “an enormous public secret.”

Cornea or Cornet are not quite right in their heads” was his policeman’s conclusion.¹⁵⁵ Fredericks, waving his Bible about, was also labeled a lunatic, speaking “about nonsensical topics.” If Le Fleur’s Griqua movement was mad, however, it was also consistent, an extension of highveld popular politics into the Karoo and Matatiele regions in the very manner long cherished by chiefs, interpretive experts, and praise-poets.¹⁵⁶ It seemed mad because it lacked a material basis: land.

In one of his deacons’ meetings, Le Fleur asked “how many communities in East Griqualand were going to join them?” and Brother Makabuwa volunteered “five in Pondoland,” and that “some were calling to us even in Basutoland.”¹⁵⁷ What were these communities joining them to do? In Stormsvlei in 1924, the women took charge of the village and pledged themselves to A. A. S. le Fleur “til death,” as Griquas (though they appeared “all shades” with “natives ... a good percentage”).¹⁵⁸ At the end of March 1926, according to a witness, Le Fleur called a meeting with the lords and important men of Mount Ayliff, and an assistant cried out, “*Ema!*” “Stand!” in Xhosa, and

Chief Le Fleur then said I am here to inform you that the ground in Africa has been handed back to me by King George and General [J. B. M.] Hertzog, and further stated that all the Coloured and natives should unite in Africa. He did not say for what purpose.¹⁵⁹

THE WIDER FRAME, 1910S–1920S

The most famous Moses of this period was neither Le Fleur nor Samuel but a Malawian clerk named Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union, or “ICU.” Kadalie similarly mobilized “Coloureds” and “Natives” together in South Africa, creating a mass movement of an almost “religious” character. Begun in Cape Town, the ICU developed its strongest base in the Eastern Cape and Natal, but increasingly from 1925, Kadalie’s organizers began recruiting members on the highveld.

¹⁵⁵ Jean and John L. Comaroff, “The Madman and the Migrant: Work and Labor in the Historical Consciousness of a South African People,” *American Ethnologist*, 14, 2 (1987), 191–209; Bob Edgar and Hilary Sapire, *African Apocalypse*; Shula Marks, ed., *Not Either an Experimental Doll: The Separate Worlds of Three South African Women* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1987), 39, 201 ff.; Jonathan Sadowsky, *Imperial Bedlam: Institutions of Madness in Colonial Southwest Nigeria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

¹⁵⁶ SAB JUS 528 6515 – 64/29 William Jacob’s deputy (on Hannie), 24/9/21; and Captain, South African Police (SAP) to Deputy Commissioner, SAP, Cape Town, “Seditious talk ...”

¹⁵⁷ UNISA E. M. S. le Fleur collection, “Minutes of Griqua National Independent Church,” January 7, 1924 (Book: 1923–5); original in Afrikaans.

¹⁵⁸ SAB NTS 7600 4/328 Vol. 3, South African Police, Worcester to Resident Commissioner, Cape Town, 15/12/24.

¹⁵⁹ SAB JUS 528 6515 – 64/29, Moyo Lingani, Kaka’s Location, Matatiele District, dep. before P. L. De Kock, 3/4/26.

The ICU intersected in Cape Town and the Eastern Cape with the Garveyite movement, especially as shepherded by “Professor” James Thaele, disseminating the teachings of Marcus Garvey, the West Indian pan-Africanist; it overlapped with the nascent South African Native National Congress (1912), later renamed the African National Congress or ANC, in which Thaele was also involved; and it touched even the South African Communist Party, which nominally condemned apocalyptic or religious thinking. Some men traversed several of these movements.

In the countryside, rumors spread among new or putative affiliates of the ICU that everyone had to slaughter their pigs for the coming cataclysm; and even more, that black American airplane pilots were coming to bomb the Afrikaners (or Boers) and drive them into the sea. Persons with a red card, an ICU membership card, would be protected. The American connection was not new, as we have seen; contemporaneously, the Zulu-speaking Wellington Buthelezi, who was dismissed as a con man and a fraud, pretended to be an American and promulgated the notion that King George had given Africa to the American Negroes for their wartime service.¹⁶⁰ Over the next two years, the ICU grew explosively as its organizers echoed a similar line, founding centers rapidly in the Eastern Cape, Natal, and the Free State, particularly in Bloemfontein and other towns. A distant and powerful chief (or king) was invoked, and the idea that black Americans were coming grew, even in “the remotest rural districts.”¹⁶¹

In times of unrest and reorganization, everything is grist for the mill. ICU organizers seized upon prophetic language, sought out experts Christian and non-, and predicted imminent divine intervention. Sometimes, pace Isaiah Shembe, ancestors were said to be coming to throw down lightning. Highveld radical talk associated “the Boers” with “pigs” at the same time that Sunday meetings told Christians to shun pork as “unclean” meat, and Clements Kadalie called upon black farmers to “strip the pigs of their farms.”¹⁶² In this context Le Fleur spoke more and more to “Natives.” While sometimes he railed against the ICU and against the notion of an American salvation (perhaps noting a policeman in the crowd), at other times, he told his audience that “the

¹⁶⁰ Crais, *Politics of Evil*, 137; the best account of the ICU or Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union is provided by Helen Bradford, *A Taste of Freedom: The ICU in Rural South Africa, 1924–1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 217, 224; and see Sean Redding, *Sorcery and Sovereignty: Taxation, Power and Rebellion in South Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006), 133.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Bradford, *Taste of Freedom*, 11, 195, 126, 140.

¹⁶² Thanks to Robert Hill for his Letshwenya genealogy (Masagha) and the “Afro-Athlican Constructive Gaathly” list of members. Robert Trent Vinson, “‘Sea Kaffirs’, ‘American Negroes’ and the Gospel of Garveyism in Early Twentieth-Century Cape Town,” *Journal of African History*, 47 (2006), 282; Bradford, *Taste of Freedom*, 101, 162; Paul B. Rich, *State Power and Black Politics, 1912–1951* (London: Macmillan, 1996), an excellent study concerned with cities and the African National Congress which mentions neither Le Fleur nor Samuel (see his subsection, “Radical Impulses,” 37 ff., 82 ff., treating Garveyism, the ICU, and the Communist Party). Chanock, *Law*, 289 ff.; for Crais, see later in chapter.

American Troops are coming over and [will] take South Africa by force, and the Europeans will leave in blood.”¹⁶³ The apocalyptic was rephrased again and again at the very edge of the actionable.

The historians William Beinart and Colin Bundy, in their pathsetting work on popular political consciousness, call this era “rural Africanism” in considering phenomena similar to that which I have treated here. Luise White describes yet similar discourses in Zambia as a kind of “rumor,” a useful restatement of real productive relations in an idiom calling for action. These historians show how, in the face of declining access to land, oppressive taxation, or trauma, ordinary people harnessed what was different from the world they already knew, making the exotic comprehensible. Here, we have seen how highveld leaders in crises invoked named chiefs and (the) A/ancestor as a force trumping the sovereignty of human will. There was a tradition of hybridizing political engagement surviving on the highveld in the 1920s, hailing from the days of the *torwa* and stone-settled *ha-rotse* prestige-place: this was its manifestation. Ancestors were part of the rallying call of every self-constituted leader, over the centuries joining people together in partnerships and twin courts. Literate discourse split the thrust of such a threat into compartments: the political and forbidden; the ostensibly mistargeted, tribal and primitive, the superstitious; the vetted release of legitimate feeling in religious worship. But the parts kept coming together again.

The dispossession of Christian sharecroppers therefore coincided with a crisis of representation in the halls of state power. The South African government ceased being able to fathom highveld movements, partly because they scarcely wanted to.¹⁶⁴ How could a genuine chiefship in Thaba Nchu be made without “revolutionizing the country” (in the Reverend Daniel’s words)? Was not the belief in such a possibility a form of derangement? Amid the continuities described above came the Kimberley Garveyites, comprising a roster of thirty-two Barolong, Basuto, and métis names; they joined the church of the West Indian preacher Robert Athlyi Rogers but called it a “Gaathly,” not a church, blending Garvey and Athlyi into a neologism. They developed their own sacred text, a “Black Man’s Bible,” eschewing Moffat’s version. It was called “The Book of Piby.” Haile Selassie’s coronation in Ethiopia gave them their focus after Pastor Roberts recrossed the Atlantic with some of his followers: thus was founded the Ras Tafari of Jamaica.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Preaching to “Hlangwinis, Xesibes, Barolongs and Ba[t]lapings,” SAB JUS 528 6515–64/29, Skova Mngeni, dep. to Const. Venter, 4/4/26; SAB NTS 7600 4/328 CID Kokstad, Ap. 4, 1927; Sean Redding, *Sorcery*, as above, cites some of these reports.

¹⁶⁴ Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires*, Introduction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); William Beinart and Colin Bundy, *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa: Politics and Popular Movements in the Transkei and Eastern Cape, 1890–1930* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1987), 34, refer to “a range of political and cultural responses” that involved “a struggle for local religious and political independence, frequently tinged with a renunciation of beliefs and structures too closely identified with settler society.”

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Leo Spitzer, “The Sierra Leone Creoles, 1870–1900,” in Phil Curtin, ed., *Africa and the West, Intellectual Responses to European Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press,

In the Eastern Cape, the leader of the “Israelites,” pastor Enoch Mgiijima, led his congregation in occupying a commonage called Bullhoek in 1921. Scores of believers were killed when the police opened fire to drive them away and their bullets failed to turn to water. The court-directed inquest into the matter referred to belief and irrationality endemic to tribal people; untoward actions by highveld chiefs had always been described as motivated by superstition. The judge therefore blamed the killings on administrative and police errors. Nonetheless he also remarked, with perhaps more perspicacity, “The real bond [among the Bullhoek Israelites] was the crazy notion that the day was coming when the black man was to have his freedom.”¹⁶⁶

These notions were crazy, unthinkable. The answer to them, both representational and governmental, was engineered by the Segregationist government in the 1920s. It was to split the populace in two, between citizens and perpetual tribesmen, and then link them together again through a citizen-appointed bureau of expert colonial administrators. As the state revived and remade chiefship in this framework, dissenters shouted competing claims on “tradition” and authority. Active political organizers could not properly or fully specify their own ultimate resources in the available epistemology; better to choose cacophony. Fredericks said his power came from “the Administrator,” without identifying further. The Prophet Shembe said he wanted to inscribe his followers’ names on the landscape, on stone, so that when a “new Government” came, a man from “England,” their ownership of the land would be preserved and advertised. Sometimes it was “ancestor,” chief, or lion; at other times, Moshoeshoe, Samuel, Khulukwe, or Shaka, who offered land and protection. Le Fleur told gatherings that “a certain kind of thing ... from Heaven” would attack all those who spurned his message – Europeans, Natives, and Coloureds. He did not, Police Sgt. Mantshule recalled, “explain what sort of thing this would be.”¹⁶⁷

LATE SEGREGATION AND THE SAMUELITES

With the passage of the 1926 Native Proclamations Act, and a move in 1926 to inscribe “headmen” in “Native Reserves” (including Thaba Nchu), the state’s administrative logic hardened.¹⁶⁸ All “traditional” rulers were to fall under the “rule by proclamation” by the Secretary of the Native Affairs Department.

1981), 124, who used the Bible “as a source of historical evidence,” one that put them “at the vanguard of civilization”; George Eaton Simpson, “The Ras Tafari Movement in Jamaica: A Study of Race and Class Conflict,” *Social Forces*, 34, 2 (December 1955), 167–71.

¹⁶⁶ The police shot 183 to death. Robert Edgar, *Because They Chose the Plan of God: The Story of the Bullhoek Massacre* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1988); Clifton Crais, *The Politics of Evil*, 117–21; Chanock, *The Making of South African Legal Culture*, 6–7.

¹⁶⁷ SAB JUS 528 6515 – 64/29, Jonas Mantshule, deputy to Constable Venter, 4/4/26.

¹⁶⁸ SAB NTS 308 4/54, Resident Magistrate, Thaba Nchu to SNAD, 31/7/26 (reiterating the department’s right to proclaim legislation); UNISA, E. M. S. le Fleur Collection, A. A. S. le Fleur papers, Kotze [?], “Right of Land in Thaba Nchu,” 1926, ms., 162.

Within that purview, listed “chiefs” were to handle civil cases according to generally accepted principles, while criminal cases were automatically sent to a Resident Magistrate. Magistrates were already (from 1914) permitted to ban forums or convocations for “Natives” by decree as riotous, but as of 1927, all mass assemblies were presumed illegal, by Government Notice no. 1787, unless they were sanctioned in advance or were religious in nature.¹⁶⁹

The capstone law, the Native Administration Act of 1927, underlined tribes as a necessary component of the state’s blueprint. As Mahmood Mamdani has suggested, this was a late, and very thorough, application of Lord Frederick Lugard’s pioneering imperial policy of “indirect rule.” The category “Native” was filled through the administration’s apprehension of who belonged to tribes.¹⁷⁰ Natives were tribal people; Coloureds were not. Under the new dispensation, the remaining commons areas at Thaba Nchu became “native locations,” Thaba Nchu (Seleka), Ratlou, Mokoena, and Motlatla. They formed a broken ring around the old town center, which Barolong had long deserted. Sediba, the Samuelites’ firmest base, became a separate horseshoe of “tribal” land, in effect a partnered court. The NAD however appointed a “chief” over the whole: Tshipinare’s son John Phetogane Sepinaar [Tshipinare] Moroka, also known as John S. Moroka, a “useless and untrustworthy fellow,” according to the local magistrate. The NAD paid him £24 per year. (It was thereby hoped that “the question of Samuel Moroka’s return to the District will be solved,” said the Bechuanaland Protectorate’s Resident Commissioner, R. M. Daniel, wrong as usual.)¹⁷¹

Reduced to perennial insecurity in Francistown and Matsiloje, the Samuelites of the Tati District were divided and isolated. In the 1920s their numbers dropped below 4,000. William Bogacu was said to be armed and looking “to shoot” John Boom; Bogacu, it was complained, read people’s private mail. Samuel asked the government to help expel Boom, John Kehiloe, and Samuel G. Mokgothu, who were in Tati, and made as if to flog forty

¹⁶⁹ Chanock, *Law*, 289 ff. This shift is described by Mamdani, *Citizens and Subjects*, 95; Dubow, *Racial Segregation*, 115, and Diana Wylie, *Starving on a Full Stomach: Hunger and the Triumph of Cultural Racism in South Africa* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), nicely, 63 ff.; and La Hausse la Louviere, *Restless Identities*, 211.

¹⁷⁰ Lugard formulated his views from his experiences as a mercenary subduing Buganda in the 1890s and as an officer treating with the emirs of the Sokoto Caliphate in what became Nigeria; see Margery Perham, ed., *The Diaries of Lord Lugard* (4 vols.), Vol. 2, *East Africa, December, 1890 to December, 1891* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1959–63), and Margery Perham, *Lugard: The Years of Authority, 1898–1945* (Hamden: Archon, 1960), 125 ff.

¹⁷¹ SAB NTS 308 4/54, Resident Magistrate, Thaba Nchu to SNAD, 6/10/26; Native Commissioner, Thaba Nchu to SNAD, 16/11/29. Lt. Colonel Rowland M. Daniel, the Assistant (Resident) Commissioner for the Northern Protectorate in Francistown, from 1908, succeeded Jules Ellenberger as Resident Commissioner of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, “Acting” from 1926 to 1928, then retiring in the 1930s. Neil Parsons and Michael Crowder, eds., and Sir Charles Rey, *Monarch of All I Survey: Bechuanaland Diaries, 1929–1937* (Gaborone: Botswana Society, 1988), 237, n.7.

or so men he called “strikers,” supporting Bogacu and his agents’ surveillance.¹⁷² The NAD meanwhile informed Kehiloe’s lawyers that Kehiloe was a phony, as he had “no mandate from the Chief [Samuel] or the tribe to act in a representative capacity.” Having officially disempowered Samuel, the government purported to defer only to him.¹⁷³ Meanwhile William Bogacu as Samuel’s “Secretary” continued to search out a place for “the Barolong” to settle, claiming to act with full “tribal” authority.¹⁷⁴ Secretary Bogacu asked particularly for a reserve near Ramatlabama among the people of the place of fish [*batlhaping*], or along the Molopo River, in three farms under chief Letlamoreng (which in the 1980s were turned into a “traditional Tswana” theme park).¹⁷⁵ Bogacu even inquired with the government of Argentina, as to the availability of land in the *pampas* – “a Colony for my people.”¹⁷⁶

In 1926 the ICU’s membership peaked in the Free State, and tens of thousands of men and women signed up to a message of mobilization and liberation coded into a simple ancestor–God syllabary. Clements Kadalie explained in East London that the “I” stood for God the Father, the “C” for the Son, and the “U” for the Holy Spirit.¹⁷⁷ More widely the significance was omniscience: ICU was “I see you.” Kadalie’s supporters in neighboring Pondoland sang that Kadalie had come to unite “flocks that spurn each other, Shangaans [Nguni-speakers from north of Kosi Bay] and Coloureds, Son of a black man in the land of our ancestors.”¹⁷⁸ Kadalie stressed the ICU’s need to backdate their unity as a human community to the great-great time (*bogologolo*). He called on members to “be more Zulu-like” and to abandon the “white man’s God.” Instead of that anonymous A/ancestor, said A. W. G. Champion, the head of the Natal ICU, Chief Shaka might be taken as a substitute in devotional songs and prayers. Similarly William Bogacu, returning to the same untranslated idea, promoted Samuel as the “Paramount Chief of the Barolong Tribe.”

¹⁷² William Bogachu signed “Bogacu.” Samuel collectively labeled a faction of Youngmen/*Magasa* and their allies “strikers” in 1925, most likely for the benefit of the attending Europeans, evoking the White Miners’ Strike of 1922 and a 1925 suppression of an ICU protest in Bloemfontein that resulted in bloodshed. BNA RC 8/5, Samuel to Res. Mag. (Francistown), Matsiloje, 16/3/25; Jeremy Krikler, *White Rising: The 1922 Insurrection and Racial Killing in South Africa* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

¹⁷³ SAB NTS 306 1/54, Resident Magistrate (RM), Bloemfontein (Skirring) to Van Aardt and Harris, n.d.

¹⁷⁴ “It is probable that he would be regarded by natives in that District as their Chief; discord would result.” SAB NTS 306 1/54, RM, Bloemfontein, and Van Aardt and Harris, to SNAD, 25/6/26; SNAD to Van Aardt and Harris, Pretoria 1/7/26; William Bogacu to RM, Matsiloje 30/10/26.

¹⁷⁵ BNA RC 8/5, William Bogacu to RM, Matsiloje 16/3/25.

¹⁷⁶ SAB NTS 308, 4/54, Copy: Samuel Moroka, Matsiloje, 30/11/26.

¹⁷⁷ Bradford did not focus on the Orange Free State; S. J. Jingoos, *A Chief Is a Chief by the People* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), an engaging organizer’s biography, offers no summary data on the ICU’s growth in the Free State.

¹⁷⁸ Bradford, *Taste*, 237; Clements Kadalie, *My Life in the ICU: The Autobiography of a Black Trade Unionist in South Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1970), 36.

In the city of Kimberley, several hundred current and prospective Samuelites, of different colors and backgrounds, gathered for a planned two days of organized listening and strategizing, on 16 and (it was planned) 18 February 1927. John (J. O.) Kehiloe had been reembraced by Samuel and the Bogachu court, and he presided over the first meeting. Getting ready to speak, he was rudely preceded by the unwelcome figure of the Kimberley Resident Magistrate, who read a brief text. “The government has no intention of permitting the return ... [of chief] Samuel,” was the gist of his message. Mokgothu and the other Samuelites shifted uncomfortably in their seats, but after the magistrate left, Kehiloe, retaking the podium, said such words were “of no consequence, as the Magistrate was not aware of the true facts of the case.” The meeting continued, as before, according to prearranged protocol. There was a further commitment to secure contributions, take action, move about, and consult sympathetic officials, all so that Samuel might “return.”¹⁷⁹

The magistrate at Bloemfontein commented that he wished there were “some means of exerting summary authority in cases where people, though just keeping within the law, are sowing dissension and breeding sedition.”¹⁸⁰ Was not the raft of “Acts” in 1926 and 1927, described above, such a means? The 1927 Act confined unvetted mass assemblies in principle to coreligionists or tribes. Thaba Nchu’s farmlands were the most overcrowded places in all rural South Africa in the 1920s; in a territory amounting to 1,185 square miles, there were about 3,000 Europeans and (as the 1928 census categorized them) 29,000 “Natives,” and 500 “Coloureds.”¹⁸¹ The police would thenceforth have to observe and vet the true character of any targeted meeting there, determining if it were religious, tribal, or criminal.

Contemporary rumors circulated of a rising of men who would “murder the white people.”¹⁸² Meanwhile the Samuelites began to insist that Samuel’s ban had been for “fifteen years,” that it was not permanent, and that “everyone” knew this. Kehiloe proclaimed that the “Moroka court” at Thaba Nchu would “announce” the “resolution” that Samuel would return.¹⁸³ How could it not be so? At evening meetings, Israel Phuti, the Barolong Land Settlement Committee treasurer, declared that “chief Samuel Moroka will be coming to Thaba Nchu soon, every man must know that ... Chief Samuel Moroka has been allowed by *the Government* to come to Thaba Nchu.”¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁹ SAB NTS 306 1/54, Constable Braybrooke to South African Police (SAP), Bloemfontein, Thaba Nchu, 22/2/1927; and SNAD to Resident Magistrate, Bloemfontein, 8/3/27.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., RM, Bloemfontein (Shirling) to SNAD, Pretoria, 21/2/27.

¹⁸¹ VAB LTN 2/3/4, N. 17/14/2, Annual Report for 1928; Murray, *Black Mountain*, 120–8.

¹⁸² Bradford, *Taste*, 112, 125–7; quote, “murder,” 148, typifying the 1920s; Bloemfontein, 8, 140 ff.; Robert Vinson, “Sea Kaffirs.”

¹⁸³ SAB NTS 307 1/54, Samuel to RM, Francistown, 18/6/29; SAB NTS 306 1/54, William Bogacu to SNAD, 24/2/27.

¹⁸⁴ My *italics*. SAB NTS 306 1/54, South African Police Report, Thaba Nchu, 18/4/27; Director of Native Labor to SNAD, Johannesburg, 12/12/27; GS, Mafeking, to SNAD,

In May of 1928, Kehiloe's lawyers forwarded a "petition" to the NAD, signed by 1,700 men, followed by almost 400 more, all told representing between 8,000 and 10,000 individuals. They signed in strong support of a restored chiefly domain, and for Samuel's return. Almost one in every twenty-five surnames on the petition was Dutch. In the context of decreasing grazing and increasing labor dues demanded by landlords, these men signed at some peril to themselves were their activities made known to their *baas*.¹⁸⁵ The NAD was told that Kehiloe lacked the support of "the respectable section of the Barolong" and wrote a single-page reply two months later, sent to Samuel's attorneys, Van Aardt and Harris: Thank you, but our position is unchanged. The day was not coming.¹⁸⁶

THE ALMOST-SEEN AND THE ALMOST-HEARD

It is difficult enough to understand peasant uprisings when they are manifested in the colonial archives. Ranajit Guha has written eloquently about the problem: when uprisings are "historicized," they become "merely an element in the career of colonialism," either oppositional, or facilitating, to something bigger than they. The peasant, fitted into the grand story (of empire, or of nationalism), cannot be understood as "a subject of history in his own right."¹⁸⁷ He deviates or conforms to a script; alternatively he is heard speaking mad or magical words. Colonial officials by default behaved like "the Esperantists of philosophy and science," as Antonio Gramsci warned, as if their language were "a piece of clothing that can fit indifferently as form over any content." For them, "everything that is not expressed in their language is a delirium, a prejudice, a superstition."¹⁸⁸

Gramsci and Guha wrote about strikes and uprisings that forcibly impressed themselves on the sensorium of the state, however imperfectly. What about movements that nearly, but not quite, came together in a visible mass – movements that redeployed the language and consciousness of a past era without the benefit of the sustained relationships that had produced them? At the least, the problem is compounded. Other historians have observed that South African highveld denizens approached some kind of crisis around 1926 or 1927. Denied land, denied a way of participating in improving their lot and so

7/4/28; Superintendent Cooper (Bloemfontein) to SNAD, 14/4/28; RM, Francistown to GS, Mafeking, 2/4/28; SNAD telegram to multiple parties, 17/4/28.

¹⁸⁵ 1,717 signatures from all over South Africa, 360 followed: SAB NTS 307 1/54, petition copy. It is plausible that an earlier petition mentioned by Lack bore 4,000 names.

¹⁸⁶ SAB NTS 307 1/54, SNAD to Van Aardt and Harris, 23/7/28.

¹⁸⁷ Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 13.

¹⁸⁸ Antonio Gramsci, "People, Nations and Cultures," in David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, eds., *Selections from Cultural Writings*, trans. William Boelhower (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1985), 375; Gramsci, "Philosophical and Scientific Esperanto," chap. 19 in *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. and ed. David Boothman (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1995), esp. 447.

making a better future, people in great stress hustled one another into hybrid organizations, allying with one another as near-equals under the sign of an ancestral chief, the father, in search of a place in which they might rule themselves. They did not, however, and could not, resort to force; their activities did not materialize as a movement suddenly recognized by colonial observers. Failing to rise to the level of brute conflict, their movements nonetheless made the “group in power” distinctly uneasy. The constancy of the logic of people’s political efforts, their pervasive character, gave officials pause. Some force was behind them: there was an undisclosed peril in their incoherence. Eventually the “tidings” of the ICU spread mostly through this simple and incessantly repeated “song”: “ICU [I see you] – o father, ICU – o father.”¹⁸⁹ A father did not come to lead Samuel’s generation out of the nexus of capitalism, racism, and state power; nor did Samuel, nor “the Americans,” nor “the Administrator.” But just the same, the song was unsettling.

Rather than grasp the politics before them, the South African state preferred to think of tribes, and to treat them as unpredictable, swayed by misapprehensions, at sea in the hurly-burly of “modernity.” And so, more and more, the state turned to professional ethnographers to explain and predict the behavior of its subjects.

¹⁸⁹ Bradford, *Taste*, 237.

Twentieth-Century Tribes

Throughout decades of competitive political formulations, from the 1920s onward, the official understanding of popular politics remained fairly elementary. Chiefdoms were seen as natural phenomena. Because the Christians' ideal kingdom was made of what people strove for on earth, Christianity echoed traditional highveld political speech much more closely than government-recognized tribalism. Anthropologists stepped into the breach and labored to learn and catalogue the life of African people, writing their rules of inheritance and civic justice, their habits of labor, their religions. They found complex and multilayered identities within and shared between chiefdoms. At the same time, they framed their results in an ethnic or tribal paradigm, set in an undefinable time. One scholar in particular made a meticulous and broad contribution to knowing the highveld in this way. This chapter appraises his work in the context of contemporaneous popular mobilizations.¹

Men continued, in crises, to express their commitment to their chief with the ideas, tone, and emphases that Christians long ago laid claim to. Men continued to resort to mobile generational alliances and partnerships in the name of a putative shared ancestor, in pursuit of land and wealth. Such was the basic shape of the historical subjectivity of most South Africans. The Native Affairs Department (NAD) and British imperial officials ham-fistedly kept *their* understandings of subjectivities in play, treating loyalties as organic affiliations that might somehow remain intact even without real chiefly or public community power. There seemed sometimes to be two different conversations proceeding at the same time, imagined as one, but actually made to intersect only by the application of force.

¹ See the pathbreaking volumes, James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), and Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

MODELS OF SELF-REPRESENTATION: THE TATI SAMUELITES AND
THE MATSHEKA THABA NCHU SAMUELITES

In the wake of the International Commercial Workers' Union's (the ICU's) crest, and the subsiding of other movements in the late 1920s, the African National Congress (ANC) expanded its base, and became the vanguard of popular struggle in many places, especially in the Eastern Cape.² In the Free State farms of the Caledon Valley, however, the ANC was slower to broaden its appeal. There, two notions of "the Barolong tribe" vied with each other at the outset of the Depression years: a historically inclusive one, and a restricted one tied to race and state-recognized land rights.

Samuelite organizers put forth the broad, inclusive version of Barolong; landowners and the Native Affairs Department favored the narrower version. Both of them refined their presentations over time. In fact, Samuel and his people depicted themselves in several ways, not always in ethnic terms at all. Depending on the circumstances, Samuel was a British imperial citizen, a deposed eldest prince, or a prayerful servant of legitimate authority. Like other prominent educated men, such as Fort Hare's D. D. T. Jabavu, he sometimes echoed the rhetoric of the Allied Powers, in the years of the Great War, and made his appeal on international, moral grounds. Always, however, the appeal pushed "tribe" toward a definition untenable to the South African state. As Timothy Bogachu wrote on Samuel's behalf,

As the Peace of Justice, Right, and Freedom has been proclaimed to all loyal subjects of the British Empire, I as one of them, humbly beg for the same Justice, Right and Freedom that I may be allowed to visit the Union ... You Sir, as a gentleman, under which we are entrusted to show our unswerving loyalty by seeing order prevailing on such occasion. Your humble petitioners are willing and will be in readiness, to cooperate with local authorities to seeing everything done, in order and quikness [*sic*]. We are your humble servants.³

This was situational strategy. A decade later, Timothy Bogachu's cousin William Bogac[h]u adopted a variant of the same "Legalese" in writing to Resident Commissioner Rowland Mortimer Daniel, while at the same time

² Paul B. Rich, *State Power and Black Politics, 1912–1951* (London: Macmillan, 1996); and see André Odendaal, *Vukani Bantu! The Beginnings of Black Protest Politics in South Africa to 1912* (London: Macmillan, 1996), Introduction; Clifton Crais, *The Politics of Evil: Magic, State Power, and the Political Imagination in South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 142–3; Aran MacKinnon, "The Persistence of the Cattle Economy in Zululand, South Africa, 1900–50," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 33, 1 (1999), 98–136; and Thomas McClendon, *Genders and Generations Apart: Labor Tenant and Customary Law in Segregation-Era South Africa, 1920s–1940s* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2002), chap. 4; and most of all, Charles van Onselen, *The Seed Is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper, 1894 to 1985* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996).

³ BNA AC 5/33, Samuel Moroka to Assistant Commissioner, Francistown, 29/2/19, *sic* to "quikness" and throughout; SAB NTS 306 1/54, Petition to Secretary of Native Affairs, Cape Town, from Timothy Bogacu and about fifty others, to allow Samuel to visit Thaba Nchu, 24/3/13 (denied, 15/6/13).

admitting “tribe” to his discourse. Briskly he asked Daniel to find, for the Tati Samuelites,

another patch of land whereupon to make their abode and to improve their tribal affairs and progress. They consider their present abode most undesirable and exuberant and which would finally bring them to a doom.⁴

Every such peasant communiqué was composed with seriousness and care. The villages in the Tati were “exuberantly” poor, as were farmhands in Thaba Nchu’s formerly Barolong-controlled fields. The Tati District, with its segregated township, isolated colonists’ farms, essentially unpoliced by external authority, was, like Thaba Nchu’s rural ghettos, approaching “doom.” Death was the extreme, the exuberant extreme. As we have seen, mobility away from it was a critical part of the power of chiefs.⁵ Imprisoned in Tati in a poor climate and on inadequate pasture and rocky soils, Barolong struggled to get by, building at their cattleposts and at railway sidings, sending their men to the cities and mining barracks to earn some cash. There were about 700 adult men registered as taxpaying Barolong in Tati in 1930, and perhaps a few hundred more living outside Tati whose earnings “virtually” supported “the tribe.”⁶

Samuel was supposed to raise 30/- (British shillings) per person per year among his people, but they could not pay, and he was always in arrears to the Company. As the state proceeded to prove to everyone that petitions could not possibly succeed, the Samuelites’ missives grew fiercer, sunnier, and more declamatory in tone – more exuberant, in fact.⁷ “We, therefore, your Lordship, wish to bring to your Lordship’s notice that this affair, not only concerns the Chief, but also *the Baralong tribe as a whole*,” the tailor J. S. Kehiloe wrote in one letter. A “deputation” had been sent to

the Lord Bishop of Bloemfontein to go and ask him to enquire on their behalf from the Government as to when *their Chief, Samuel Moroka, would be set free* [my italics] from his banishment. ... the Bishop *complied with our request* [my italics] and in consequence, gave report *of his mission* [my italics] through the Revd. W. M. Mochochoke of Winberg.

The fact of simply conferring with the Reverend Walter Mochochoke, a pioneering African minister in the South African Anglican church, was seen to advance the Samuelite cause – although the government sent its usual reply: “under no circumstances” would Samuel return to Thaba Nchu.⁸ We see here an infatuation with paper in the face of uncomfortable evidence, a

⁴ BNA Resident Commissioner (RC) 8/5, William Bogacu to Resident Magistrate, Francistown (hereafter RM-F), Matsiloje 30/10/25.

⁵ Steven Feierman, “Struggles for Control: The Social Roots of Health and Healing in Modern Africa,” *African Studies Review*, 28, 2/3 (June/Sept. 1985), 73–145.

⁶ BNA S. 5/2, Moroka, RM-F to GS Mafeking, 18/2/28.

⁷ Cf. Leon de Kock, *Civilizing Barbarians* (Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand, 1996), 136.

⁸ SAB NTS 306 1/54 Kehiloe et al. to Resident Magistrate (RM), Bloemfontein, n.d. (8/9/24); WITS CPSA AB 2259 Gk, “Agreement,” 27/11/39. The italics are mine.

stealthy return to the Christian idea that writing might signify truth. The idea was bound up with education at the primary level: with, in fact, Robert Moffat's Sechuana Bible. Perhaps an artful missive, a thick petition, might effect change? No African organization in South Africa had yet dispensed with this error, but the potential of the Samuelites seemed particularly wrapped up in words.

The Reverend Mochochoke was eventually relieved of his pastorate for associating with another "schismatic body." The Samuelites in their agonies tried again. After the failure to buy land from the Tati Company, a new drive for land funds was announced, and it was decided to "notify" the "leading men" in Thaba Nchu that centers were to be established, in various parts of the Union, once again. The object was

to send representatives to various places; for paying railway allowances; for payment of stationery and all that is needed and helps us ... that is the work, O Seleka, of the sign of 'Lion'.⁹

Wheels turned, notable figures received letters, and procedures were followed. Kehiloe begged to "bring ... to your Lordship's notice," and would "appeal to your Lordship for assistance," to "humbly beg to place before you for your serious consideration and advice."¹⁰ The people of the lion, a totemic and yet open society. As in church prayers, the appearance or performance of communication, of communing, became enough, at key moments: one recited, touted, declaimed, inveighed. Imperial officials mocked such efforts in comments penciled in the margins of their curt dismissals. Of Kehiloe, tellingly: "A step nearer his Mecca."

Gradually in these places there nonetheless developed the assertion, first produced in print by Kehiloe in the mid-1920s, that *the Barolong* – and so, "the Samuelites" – meant something the Native Affairs Department (NAD) did not intend: the unfettered reoccupation of the land by the dispossessed. All of them together, *that* Barolong, of whatever sympathies, would "forget the past."¹¹ As we have seen, forgetting parts of the past, demoting one ancestor for another, claiming brotherhood where there was a rather more distant relationship, dancing a new totem – these were venerable practices. Regardless of the previous split between Tshipinare and Samuel, the unifiers of the present day could "restore" a single chiefship over historical Thaba Nchu for current

⁹ Everyone would pay 3/- (three British shillings) toward it – a pale reflection of the £40 sterling required for the failed Tati land purchase. SAB NTS 306 1/54, *Abantu-Batho* (16/10/24), my trans.

¹⁰ SAB NTS 306 1/54 Kehiloe et al. to RM, Bloemfontein, n.d. (8/9/24); WITS CPSA AB 2259 Gk, "Agreement," 27/11/39.

¹¹ SAB NTS 306 1/54 including "Report of Interview on Baralong Land Settlement Fund," Resident Magistrate, Thaba Nchu (hereafter RM-TN) to Secretary, Native Affairs Department (hereafter SNAD), 16/11/24, and 16/2/27; J. S. Kehiloe to RM-TN, stamped "Samuel Moroka," 12/10/29; and van Aardt and Harris, Attorneys, to SNAD, 25/6/26; and Kehiloe to Superintendent of Locations, Bloemfontein, 27/5/27; cf. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1983 [1991]) in its main argument.

purposes. This would happen with Samuel's return, or the coming of Samuel's successor, which would indicate the return of genuine autonomy to farmers, over their own labor, on the land. These expectations and aims reflected the norms of historical political practice, pitched up against the NAD's self-interested version of the tribe.

The Anglican Bishop of Southern Rhodesia wrote to the Resident Commissioner in 1929 to ask on Samuel's behalf that Samuel "very simply" be allowed to "gather people together again"; Samuel "feels they are scattered and exiled." Echoing Samuel's words, the Bishop grouped salvation, reunion, and settlement together as kindred concepts. The notion of sinning and that of actual, territorial wandering/separation were thus brought back to their translational sources (*phatlalala*, *latlhega*), and reunited again, so as to be given their widest outreach.¹² The Samuelites like other peasant movements kept to the *untranslated* import of their ideas, leveling heartfelt appeals to influential Christians, Barolong and métis, who were masters of the same vocabulary.

From this vantage point, in their expression, we see the rejection of distinct religious domains and of ethnic identity, a theme of highveld organization over the centuries. These Samuelites were "Barolong," but who were *they* really? As Samuel became ill, and approached his final hours in 1932, a letter was written to the liberal South African Institute of Race Relations to allay any fears. The Barolong were looking always to progress, peacefully:

We have been instructed by the executive committee of the above association [the Barolong Progressive Association] to direct this communication to you. As you are aware the Barolong tribe has established progressive societies every where with a view to uniting generally for the betterment, socially, and religiously, of the Barolong tribe.¹³

Socially and *religiously* they would move forward. Was it all Barolong, everywhere, or people of Thaba Nchu? The door to the Samuelites was never closed. The idea of "being united all over the union [*sic*] of South Africa" was proclaimed to everyone without further specifications. The Secretary of the NAD dismissed their demands as untenable.¹⁴

The Samuelites not only represented large numbers of dispossessed people but also a small, propertied elite. Intriguingly, some of the truest cosmopolitans in Thaba Nchu supported Samuelite authority, even these men who continued to live on land they themselves owned. Preeminently, Dr. James Sebe Moroka, the Edinburgh-trained physician and landowner from Tshipinare's side of the family tree, and the future president of the African National Congress, apparently leaned more and more toward the Samuelites over time. Like them, he argued that "the door" to the Native Reserves should always be open. "I would open the door to all Natives of my tribe, I would throw the door wide open to all of them," the doctor told government commissions.

¹² BNA S. 11/1, 11/12/29.

¹³ SAB NTS 9495 121/400, various correspondence of K. J. Matsheka and the BPA.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 19/6/33.

If they had a place they could stay, they would always be able to go to Bloemfontein to work there, or some other place ... and they would know they had a *home* of their own, a home for their parents and a home for themselves.¹⁵

What criteria would be applied? When asked to delimit the tribe looking for a home, the doctor could not specify. "Old Moroka was one of the most liberal of men," he told the Native Economic Commission,

and he [welcomed] everyone who came along. In the reserve you will find the Barolong and the Basutos who have been there for years and also the Bastards who have been here for years with old Moroka and who regard themselves as Barolongs, the followers of Moroka and his people.¹⁶

Such a reconstruction relied on the restoration of landed, African authority, so as to define the citizenry under it. Thus petitions continued to put forward the idea of an agglomeration of people clamoring for chiefship and land, who defined themselves by their aspirations. Only then would their well-being be preserved.

Chief Samuel died of old age on 1 October 1932. The Barolong's stature in Tati District had severely declined. The Kalanga-speaking chiefs of the Tati District, acting on their own, had already ceased paying their taxes through Samuel. The old-Africa hand, Bechuanaland Protectorate District Commissioner G. E. Nettleton, characterized "the tribe" at Matsiloje unsympathetically; according to him, they were "prolific in lunatics and generally they are not an asset."¹⁷ His assistant grumbled that the "women play a small part in agriculture," and that they required "more of the amenities of civilization than the ordinary native." Vetting a selection of replacement chiefs, Nettleton said "the state of the Barolong in the Tati at present could not possibly be made worse by anyone."¹⁸ Then, after Samuel's death, Nettleton rued a further discovery. It seems that "several" persons in the Free State had been in possession of the official "rubber stamps" of the chief, incised with the "Seleka" chiefly symbol, "Lion Rampant" (*Tau*), a mark that was "supposedly proof of Samuel's own hand."¹⁹ For some time, it turned out, there had

¹⁵ UNISA, NEC Oral Evidence, 1930-32, Vol. 8, 4867 ff., Thaba Nchu, 20/2/31, 4900-1. *My italics*.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*; *my italics*; (page) 4886, Dr. Moroka, 20/2/31; 4914.

¹⁷ Henderson Tapela, "The Tati District of Botswana," Ph.D. dissertation, History, University of Sussex, 1976, esp. 112, and Henderson Tapela, "Movement and Settlement in the Tati Region: A Historical Suvey," in R. Renée Hitchcock and Mary R. Smith, eds., *Settlement in Botswana* (Gaborone: Botswana Society, 1982), 174-88; and BNA, DC F. 3/15, G. Nettleton to Chief Magistrate, Bloemfontein, 2/12/32; SAB NTS 307 1/54, Herbst to Government Secretary, Mafeking (hereafter GS-M), 11/5/33. BNA DCF 3/21, Tati [White] Farmers' Assoc., Acting Resident Magistrate, Francistown to GS-M, 23/1/34; DCF 1/24, [Missing,] 21/7/33; BNA S.273/6 Barolong/Moroka, Ellenberger to GS-M, 16/6/33 citing Nettleton's "minute."

¹⁸ Last note, and BNA DCF 3/15, Nettleton to GS-M, 1/10/32, and Acting Resident Magistrate (W. E. Mangan) to GS-M, 4/6/32.

¹⁹ BNA RC 8/5, Land Settlement Committee (?) to Samuel, Matsiloje, 13/3/25.

been no actual chiefship. There had only been situational reflections of one, symbols, like those for a chiefly ancestor.

A new organization sought a version of the Samuelites' ends in the 1930s, the Barolong Progressive Association, or BPA. Samuelism persisted without Samuel, and the BPA recaptured some of the unity of the movement fragmented by multiple royal seals and locations. Colin Murray, in his treatment of this group, suggests that it developed a new Barolong big-tent inclusivity in the 1930s, in reaction to the closing of Thaba Nchu: the state rejected a great number of applications to live in Thaba Nchu at the time. If people could not define each other as "kin" for the purposes of cohabitation and production, they might, as the community leader Kali John Matsheka put it, nonetheless all be "sons of Tau [the Lion]." One only adds again that this was no novelty, but exactly what facilitated the growth of massive states on the land in the early nineteenth century. By the rules promulgated under the Native Administration Act of 1927, however, thousands of people lost their rights in the land and were sent wandering, many with nowhere to go, unable to claim an inheritance either in the hugely overcrowded "Native Reserves" or on private farms. The BPA maintained "a generalised desire to recover the people and the land," and espoused the Samuelites, in a single gesture: uniting the land and the people. The BPA would overturn all landlord rights if it could, those of Europeans, and those of the few remaining, mostly Tshipinarite Barolong landlords. The idea was to engage Tati and Free State Barolong, to draw the interest of harried cattlemen and career farmhands.²⁰

Materially speaking, the BPA men were "marginalised landowners or small businessmen without land," as Murray has found, although in their communities, they were leaders of some stature. Jeremiah Soldaat organized a watchdog group ("Barolong's Eye"), and wrote the Secretary to the Resident Magistrate at Thaba Nchu to list their demands. He required that "the Barolong" be recognized "as a nation" and be allowed "their enfranchisement." The resident magistrate called Soldaat to his office and bullied him into recanting his complaints. Afterward, however, the BPA continued to petition the judge. They announced plans to enlarge their sphere of autonomy: to tax themselves (as Barolong) and build their funds, and buy land somewhere, even while asserting their right to inherit Thaba Nchu on historical grounds. They would "fight" the strict policing of residence rights in Thaba Nchu's "Native Reserves" (according to the "seven-day pass" rule), and they questioned the meaning of the old annexation of greater Thaba Nchu in South African jurisprudence. Surely President Brand in 1884 had acted in haste, in the spirit of "martial law," and not to establish a "principle"?²¹

²⁰ Colin Murray, *Black Mountain: Land, Class and Power in the Eastern Orange Free State, 1880s–1980s* (Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand Press, 1992), 145.

²¹ Literally recant: that by "nation" the BPA meant "tribe," by "enfranchisement" they meant "elect officers," and by "cooperation" the BPA meant "work together to carry out the law." First quote in para: Murray, *Black Mountain*, 145; and "As all nations do the same Sir, we used to have one called 'Leitho ya morafe[']' or the Barongs Eye [*sic*]. That was registered. We

Barolong unity mostly meant the unity of men, but a “Woman’s Branch” of the BPA also formed in Thaba Nchu. They struck a biblical chord, in their petition to reunite “the Barolong”:

We desire for ourselves and to our children who are scattered all over the industrial centers, a homely residence in the land of our fathers.... We as mothers feel the pain even more than did the mothers of Israel during the slavery atrocities because our children are not killed, yet they are not allowed to reside with us.²²

The idea of the natural tribe, and that of gathering scattered, lost Israelites, were here made to signify together. If the polity was tribal, its unity was inviolate. It was known that Jews were returning to Palestine under imperial oversight. The metaphor of “home,” of the Zionist reintegration of God’s ancient house with an ancestral place, shone brightly. The petitioning women also emphasized that they were separated from their own people and from their own land, in the most essential way, as mothers of their children. Behind their “pain” was also a decline in the quality of life: when men were mobilized apart from women, as in the past, women suffered from violence and from want.

Their petitions failed. When Samuel died, most of the Matsiloje Samuelites fled Tati District and returned to South Africa on their own. With so many people gone, the remaining Barolong retreated into local matrices, speaking the Kalanga language at the market and tap, maintaining their old speech only in the privacy of their yards. The configuration of power in the Bechuanaland Protectorate promised small chiefdoms only anonymity and diminishing relevance, and at Matsiloje, as well as up at Moroka Siding (or “Stadt”) and Ramaquabana, where the chief moved, the Barolong dwindled to a few.

The railway line confirmed the Tati District as less a place, in and of itself, than an embarkation point for transnational labor recruitment. It was run by white South Africans who siphoned people into South Africa, legally and illegally. Plumtree’s “Native Commissioner” permitted the Globe and Phoenix Mine to register incoming laborers, “bypassing Pass Law Registration applying to all natives entering the country” (meaning South Africa). The state and its licensed monopsonies banned the recruitment of “tropicals” (African workers from north of 22° l.) because of their supposed vulnerability to disease. Highveld and Zimbabwean highland men also used Tati to get straight to the Rand, evading the state’s contracted gatekeepers. Haskins and Sons recruited some of the transients for a South West African enterprise: when Nettleton asked the men where they came from, they pretended their villages were there, in the Tati District. Unwilling to

are sir your obedient Servants M. Seiphemo Secretary, President: M. S. Moroka, Chairman: K. J. Matsheka.” VAB LTN 2/3/4, N.1/16/5, BPA to RM-TN, 25/2/28; RM-TN to BPA, 13/3/28. And: “Did the proclamation [of 12 July 1884, banishing the top Samuelites] provide for one section only to reside in Thaba Nchu, and what was to become of the other section?” VAB LTN 2/3/4, N.1/16/5, BPA to SNAD, Thaba Nchu, 6/3/29.

²² SAB NTS 9495 121/400, Woman’s Branch of BPA to RM-TN, n.d. (1930), copy.

play the enforcer, Nettleton suggested that the railway office at Bulawayo take responsibility for checking papers.²³

After Samuel's death, Percy Tshabadira Moroka ascended to the chiefship in Matsiloje, in July of 1933, when only 209 Barolong taxpayers were left there. The Samuelites' most poignant self-representations came in their closing years, in this last phase, on Percy's behalf. If they refused to delimit "Barolong" or "Thaba Nchu," if they grasped Christianity as central to their efforts, if Tati itself was less a place than an intersection, Percy was the first citizen of this domain. He had been working in a mine outside Vryburg when the BPA drafted him into the Tati chiefship and began efforts to place him with "full powers" in Thaba Nchu. An alliance of men under Moroka's name, the BPA told the government they "chose" Percy, not that he was born to rule. He connected several royal factions and brought expatriated and dispossessed farmers together with their Free State and "Reserve" brethren.²⁴ The NAD forbade Percy from visiting Thaba Nchu.

Among the very first BPA signatories on Percy's behalf, nonetheless, was John S. ["Sepinaar"] Moroka, a son of Tshipinare and (soon) the colonially designated "chief" at Thaba Nchu: this was critical support from the junior court. There was also Seiphemo, the heir in Samuel's maternal uncle's ward; the aforementioned BPA organizers Jeremiah Soldaat and Elias Ramagaga; and finally, the leading Samuelite, Kali John Matsheka. Matsheka was the son of Big John (*Lang Jan*) Matsheka, the counselor who was shot down with Tshipinare in 1884.

Percy managed to visit Thaba Nchu from Tati in 1935. John S. Moroka announced Percy as Moroka's legitimate heir, welcoming him with the remark that he himself was only a placeholder.²⁵ It was a time of declining prospects for all; in Tati the Depression meant the suspension of most mining work.²⁶ In South Africa, a batch of legislation called the "Native Bills" completed the countrywide redelineation begun earlier, assigning over 85 percent of the land to European occupation, and erased the nonwhite franchise at the Cape. The Bills punished those farmers who had managed to continue sharecropping for white landlords by demanding increasingly exorbitant "licence fees" from them, treating them as "squatters." Thus from 1936, highveld farmers were compelled anew to labor for regional, low farm wages or to move away.

²³ ZNA, PR 1/2/1 General Manager, Annual Report: Monarch Mine, 1/10/1896; ZNA, S 138 203 1925-9, General Manager's Review to Chief Native Commissioner (CNC) Salisbury, 8/2/21; Colonial Secretary Duff to President, Chamber of Mines, 30/9, and 17/10/27; S 138 203 Minute 14/1928 January 10, 1928, Native Commissioner (NC) Plumtree; F. 32/28. Haskins and Sons' contract sheets show 65 percent of their laborers were "Bamangwato," the remainder "Bakalaka" and "Barolong," i.e., Samuel's people.

²⁴ SAB NTS 307 1/54 Magistrate's Meeting, BPA and Matsheka, notes, 9/2/40.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Ramagaga testimony (uncontradicted)

²⁶ BNA DCF 3/21, Tati [White] Farmers' Assoc., Acting RM-F to GS-M, 23/1/34; BNA DCF 4/19 Insp. of Mines, B.P. to Registrar, Mafeking, 23/9/35.

The 1936 Trust and Land Act, in completing the earlier Land Act, also however entailed the allocation of a limited amount of land from government and absentee landlords to highveld farmers.²⁷ It set aside stretches of farms for “Trust” purchases and scheduled them for release to – or “for” – the “Natives,” those judged to maintain rights in Thaba Nchu. In short, more Native Reserves were to be declared for “genuine” Barolong to occupy. The BPA maintained its image for the Native Affairs Department as a tribal simulacrum, and the Secretary used them to communicate with this authentic agrarian Barolong. High expectations animated peasants and farmworkers, in and outside Thaba Nchu on the fragmented Afrikaner-owned farmlands where so many Barolong resided. The BPA encouraged the excitement. The organization broadcast the message that “We, the Barolong, who for years were disunited by the quarrel which occurred between our chiefs *are again united*. We are now in a position *to claim the restoration* of the Thaba Nchu territory.” Percy Tshabadira, their best connection to their ancient chiefs, would superintend this restoration.

The BPA wrote to the South African Institute of Race Relations (the SAIRR), a Cape institution headed by J. D. (“R. J.”) Rheinallt Jones. The SAIRR was an advocate for “progressive” nonwhite highveld farmers: modernizing, market-oriented, vanishing. The well-known scholar Winifred Hoernlé anchored the University of Cape Town in the SAIRR’s ambit. The BPA underlined their opposition to the “cutting up” of the country into farms in letters to Rheinallt Jones, and they contested the propriety of relying on Brand’s 1884 “decree” annexing Thaba Nchu – because Brand spoke of “guaranteeing the rights of the Barolong.”²⁸ Tribal rights and unity were under attack, would not Rheinallt Jones agree? The BPA would extend chiefship throughout the new “Trust” areas for the widest embrace of “Barolong” possible, superannuating landlordism of any kind! The Trust bureaucracy had only to get out of its way.²⁹ We will return to the BPA’s denouement shortly.

ANTHROPOLOGY: REAL MOBILIZATIONS, ISAAC SCHAPER, AND “THE TSWANA”

Surveying this nest of frustration and excitement, and other aborted or fading orders – a restive farmlands overall – was one very observant young European: the anthropologist Isaac Schapera. We have been considering

²⁷ Saul Dubow, *Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid in South Africa, 1919–36* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989), 14–17, 131–5, and 150–79.

²⁸ My *italics*. WITS, SAIRR, AD 843/B62.11, SAIRR to BPA, 20/2/32, noting a conversation earlier in the month between Reinallt Jones and the nascent BPA. Soldaat and Matsheka also referred to “McCalley’s history,” perhaps conflating Macauley and George McCall Theal.

²⁹ Kgoietsile (Paul) Manca and Isaac Serero. WITS SAIRR AD 843/B62.11; SAB 26–2–98 NTS 307 1/54, N Com. Krugersdorp to Director, Native Labor, Johannesburg, 6/1/36; Murray, *Black Mountain*, 165 ff.; BNA DCF 4/20, Annual Report, 1937; DCF 4/14, Acting RM-F to GS-M, 5/2/36; District Commissioner, Francistown (Nettleton) to [Percy] Tshabadira Moroka, Francistown, 12/12/38; 23/2/39.

politics in the 1930s in the southern highveld; Schapera, writing in the 1930s, described politics as a feature of tribal life. No one has done more than Schapera to create knowledge about the people of the highveld. "His" people, as ethnographers once said, were "the Tswana," but his impact was felt far beyond their domain. Schapera was part of the shift away from Christian and diffusionist missionary science about black South Africans, and toward comparative analysis and close observation. He exerted a great influence on the constitution of the Native as an ethnographic subject: what could be known, what was assumed to be beyond knowledge, about "him." In fact, South African anthropologists influenced the ethnicization and "biologization" of imperial subjects generally. In the 1920s Schapera stood in the vanguard of academic prestige, side by side with Matthew Drennan and Raymond Dart, charting new waters in paleoanthropology and archaeology.³⁰

Schapera, who was born in South Africa in 1905, studied under A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, the Durkheimian pioneer of modern sociological and anthropological scholarship, during the brief period when the professor produced his most fertile ideas and offered lectures to colonial officials in Cape Town. Schapera was Radcliffe-Brown's only master's degree student. He was taught that all social facts were to be understood with reference to other social facts, a wholistic view of societies that appears to have been naturally congenial to him. On the other hand, Radcliffe-Brown downplayed the worth of historical narrative in explaining the current situation of a society, which he felt offered sufficient data as it was encountered in the present. Schapera valued history more, and wrote his M.A. thesis about European colonization at the Cape. They shared a commitment to looking at people in larger frameworks of power, but they never really agreed about how to do so.³¹

At the London School of Economics in the 1920s, Schapera went on to study under C. G. Seligman and Bronislaw Malinowski, completing his training with a famous cohort of students, which included E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Audrey Richards, Raymond Firth, Camilla Wedgewood, and Meyer Fortes.³² In 1925 Radcliffe-Brown left for Australia (and then Oxford in 1937). Malinowski introduced his students to the practice of "participant observation" in fieldwork, but this was something Schapera never attempted. According to Hammond-Tooke, Schapera was felt by his colleagues to be personally closer to Seligman than to Malinowski. Seligman was the author of *The Races of Africa* (1930), which was organized in a

³⁰ Saul Dubow explores this milieu in his publications, especially *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). A bibliography of Schapera's works has been prepared by Suzette Heald of the University of Botswana: <http://www.thuto.org/schapera/resource/bibr.html>.

³¹ W. D. Hammond-Tooke, *Imperfect Interpreters: South Africa's Anthropologists, 1920-1990* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1997), 32-3, 49; Adam Kuper, *Anthropology and Anthropologists: The Modern British School* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), 68.

³² Kuper, *Anthropology*, 74.

traditional manner, descriptively, conjecturally with regard to history, and in an implicitly imperialist framework.

Schapera wrote his Ph.D. dissertation sitting beside Firth in the British Library, summarizing what was known of “the Bushmen and Hottentot peoples of southern Africa.” He called them “Khoisan,” a racial category first formulated by a German scholar in South West Africa, Leonard Schultze, who applied emerging zoological ideas to human societies. The approach relied also on biometric photographs and averages of physical measurements, a direct continuation of Gustavus Fritsch’s work. Schapera’s soon-standard text, *The Khoisan Peoples of South Africa*, installed a permanent and natural division among Cape and highveld people based on the statistics of their physical attributes. The types were then reimagined as two cultural sets, with finer varieties described therein. As Adam Kuper summarizes, the work was “very much in the Seligman mold.”³³

Schapera began his true fieldwork when he returned to the highveld in 1929, a moment when W. M. Macmillan was already writing about South Africa’s past in a far more nuanced manner than the “historical” treatments anthropologists were producing. When *The Khoisan* appeared in 1930 under Schapera’s name, Schapera was living in Mochudi, a town inhabited by people of the tan monkey (of *kgatla*) whom European settlers had driven out of the Transvaal. At Mochudi, as in other places in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, a viable highveld chiefdom reigned, over unenclosed grazing grounds. Schapera’s essential technique at Mochudi was the all-male, group interview in which consensus views dominated. Besides these sessions, often conducted in his own yard, Schapera cultivated a few select guides and informants, whose depictions of “Tswana life” he transcribed and translated into his notes.³⁴

From the goal of understanding the racial character of South Africa’s peoples, Schapera quickly moved toward culture. In some ways his perspective was not very different from the 1930s “Volkekunde” emphasis of Afrikaner anthropologists. He contributed centrally to several important 1930s compendia treating “culture contact” between the West, on the one hand, and South Africa’s “tribes,” on the other. But at the same time, among Schapera’s earliest writing were elucidations of highveld court arguments, oral traditions and lore, and examples of highveld people’s own written correspondence.³⁵ Indeed, in criticizing Schapera’s oeuvre, it is Schapera’s own linguistically capable,

³³ Adam Kuper, “Isaac Schapera (1905–2003), His Life and Times,” in John L. Comaroff, Jean Comaroff, and Deborah James, eds., *Picturing a Colonial Past: The African Photographs of Isaac Schapera* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 22–3; Leonhard Schultze, *Zur Kenntnis des Körpers der Hottentotten und Buschmänner*, part of the series, *Zoologische und anthropologische Ergebnisse einer Forschungsreise im westlichen und zentralen Südafrika* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1928).

³⁴ As Schap discussed with me and Neil Parsons at his home in 1990 in London.

³⁵ Isaac Schapera, “The Native as Letter Writer,” *The Critic, a South African Quarterly Journal*, 2, 1 (1933), 20–28.

historically informed, lifelong investigation that helps reveal the weakness of 1930s anthropologists' approach to history, even of his own approach.

Editing the 1937 *The Bantu-Speaking Tribes of South Africa*, Schapera took responsibility for depicting the highveld and its people, and essentially he chose to write two tableaux: a yesteryear and a modern age. The first one, the "before" picture, laid out in several essays, was infused with his understanding of "native life" from Mochudi, Molepolole, and other highveld courts in Botswana under British Protectorate rule. As a result his picture of the past was stable, even though *instability* more characterized known history. His Tswana past was rather more like the great-great time than a particular era; indeed, Schapera never theorized warfare as a basic component of highveld community behavior.³⁶ The "after" essay was called "Cultural Changes in Tribal Life." Here, the political story, and the history of people's relationship to the land, were muted by the framework of comparative cultures, tribal and "modern."

In holding onto tribes, Schapera was informed but not fundamentally misled by his Bechuanaland researches. Rather he observed recent South Africa for his model, in which tribes very clearly existed. They had been created two generations before, as part of the history of colonialism. Z. K. Matthews, an ANC founding father, also wrote of tribes; he typified wards among the people of Tshidi by ethnicizing past orders and chiefdoms, offering "Ngwato" and "Hurutshe" and so forth as internal "ethnic," or tribal, designations; so would Schapera. Missionaries had long written about contained tribes in print; nothing seemed so self-evident as the tribe to Edwin Smith, for example, who combined evangelical experience in South Africa with ethnography. Every expert from S. M. Molema to E. H. L. Schwarz had agreed: broad, basic distinctions among Bechuana (now renamed "Sotho-Tswana") people were tribal – so long as one did not have to specify exactly which tribes.³⁷

Schapera was a Radcliffe-Brownian insofar as he understood history as a set of hypothesized processes happening *to* rural people. He could not, in effect, see the transpiring politics of Africans and of Europeans as occurring in the

³⁶ Beginning with *Bantu Studies*, 4. Isaac Schapera, "Some Ethnographical Texts in SeKxatla," *Bantu Studies*, 4 (1930), 73–93; Schapera, "The 'Little Rain' (Pulanyana) Ceremony of the Bechuanaland BaKxatla," *Bantu Studies*, 4 (1930), 211–16. And Isaac Schapera and A. J. H. Goodwin, "Work and Wealth" (131–71), Schapera, "Political Institutions" (173–95), Schapera, "Law and Justice" (197–219), all in Schapera, ed., *The Bantu-Speaking Tribes of South Africa: An Ethnographical Survey* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1937).

³⁷ Taking Bechuana as a "race." Silas M. Molema, "Bantu: Bechuana, Basuto (First Ethnical Group)," in Part II, "The Past," in *The Bantu Past and Present: An Ethnographical and Historical Study of the Native Races of South Africa* (Edinburgh: W. Green, 1920; Cape Town: Struik, 1963), 35–69; Ernest Hubert Lewis Schwarz, *The Kalahari and Its Native Races: Being the Account of a Journey through Ngamiland and the Kalahari, with a Special Study of the Natives in That Area* (London: H. F. and G. Witherby, 1928); for Matthews, see n. 68 below; and Edwin Smith and Andrew M. Dale, *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1919–20).

same time frame. In 1940, in the Oxford speech to the Royal Anthropological Institute, “On Social Structure,” Radcliffe-Brown proposed,

Let us consider an African colony or possession of a European nation. There is a region that was formerly inhabited by Africans with their own social structure. ... A complex example of a composite society [of this sort] is provided by the Union of South Africa with its single political and economic structure and a population including English-speaking and Afrikaans, ... Hindus and Mohammedans ... and a number of Bantu tribes who constitute the majority.

Distinct and yet commensurate with each other, monadal, tribes might therefore be encountered as precursors to historical change – even in 1940. Amid the overall and salutary recognition of complexity, then, was a depiction of the subjectivity of the masses in terms of an array of quasi-permanent entities. Radcliffe-Brown articulated tribes as living “within an established social structure which is itself in the process of change,” seeing them as half-digested seeds rather than as part of the digestive apparatus itself. “The first essential in any modern fieldwork study,” Schapera would write, “is to obtain as full an account as possible of the existing tribal culture. In this due prominence must be given to elements taken over from or introduced by the Europeans.”³⁸

To remind ourselves what genuine highveld politics were like, we need only turn back to the contemporaneous Samuelites shortly before they came directly to Schapera’s attention.

WHISPER

Rheinallt Jones and the Native Affairs Department were last exposed to the BPA’s views in 1938. In December, the Department received an unusual letter, from Kali John Matsheka, originally written “to the Court, Thaba Nchu.”

Majesty and Commissioners

Whisper – We must proceeding in the brightness away.

It is our desire to make known to his Highness, the Governor-General of the Union of South Africa the fact that, we the Race relation³⁹ have accepted the word of the descendant of chief Moroka⁴⁰ who desires to return home.

We therefore must humbly request, his highness, the Governor-General of the Union of South Africa to declare his way home open further that he be granted and guidance all along til he arrives at his home in safety.

God save the King and Governor

Whisper please answer.

³⁸ First quote, Radcliffe-Brown, “On Social Structure,” 49–50 in W. D. Hammond-Tooke, *Imperfect Interpreters*; second quote, Isaac Schapera, “Contact between European and Native in South Africa: In Bechuanaland,” unpublished paper, cited by Hammond-Tooke, 51.

³⁹ An explanation is following.

⁴⁰ Percy.

We are your humble servants, the Race Relations.

Leader, [signed:] K. Matshika

Whisper received that name of the Elder Descendant under the peace. Percy Tshabadira Moroka

Address Box 13 Francistown⁴¹

Matsheka's (Matshika's) nominal divergence from the parameters of formal correspondence does not signify his ignorance of its form. With Jeremiah Soldaat he had already complained to the Native Economic Commission and petitioned the "boards" charged with administering the "Native Reserves" of Thaba Nchu, with pointed and pragmatic demands for changes in residential certification policy.⁴² Matsheka nonetheless wrote to "Majesty and Commissioners" this way, and also to the Commissioner of Native Affairs, Thaba Nchu, a similar but shorter notice: "Whisper Received that name of the Elder Descendent Under the Peace[,] Percy Tshabadira Moroka," signing in the singular, "Your Humble Servant, the Race Relation, K. Matsheka."⁴³

The letters were attempts to transcend bureaucratic compartments by a supreme propriety and formality, a praise, a song (*go bina*), a sermon – or all at once – put into writing. In English writing, for while the NAD received letters in Bantu languages all the time, Matsheka directed his argument to colonial authority in its language. The core elements of highveld political discourse, repatterned, refitted, encrusted with the glitter of High Church prayer, are recognizable in the apparent semi-sacralization of the chief. "Prepare ye the way," or on the highveld, "make straight the path." At the same time, as a contrary gesture, Matsheka represents his own subjectivity literally as the racial relation(ship) of whites, form-fitted to their interest. It was the effort to identify completely as the South African Institute of Race Relations' proper constituent, that produced his mistake: "we ... the Race Relations."

Percy's people, "the Barolong," or "the Race Relations," have "accepted the *word* of the descendent," writes Matsheka, indeed of the "Elder Descendant under the peace." The people have accepted; the Majesty must allow. Letting Percy become chief at Thaba Nchu was destiny. It was "proceeding in the brightness," accepting "the word," as Percy, again, was not Samuel's nearest blood kin. As noted, the BPA told the NAD that Percy "did not base his claim on Native Law of succession but on the fact that he was chosen to succeed Samuel as leader as the exiled Barolongs."⁴⁴ Kali John Matsheka asserted in

⁴¹ SAB NTS 307 1/54, K. Matsheka to "the Court, Thaba Nchu," Francistown, 12/9/38.

⁴² Murray, *Black Mountain*, 144–54.

⁴³ SAB NTS 301 1/54, K. Matsheka to Native Commissioner, Thaba Nchu, 30/9/38.

⁴⁴ See Murray, *Black Mountain*, fig. 1.2; Percy was a maternal descendent of Tshabadira (II), Moroka's elder brother, and offspring of the union Wesleyan elders refused to sacralize, between Majang and Motlhwane, but Percy was only putatively Motlhwane's son; another Moroka scion "raised up seed" for him with Majang. And SAB NTS 301 1/54, Acting Director of Native Labour to SNAD, Pretoria, 5/11/40; Native Affairs Department Memo, 28/1/41.

his letter the proper *surroundings* for these words by repeating the invocation, “Whisper.” The whisper announcing Percy’s arrival would only be heeded when other voices had been subdued, and so it transformed the (virtual) venue of their interaction into a public meeting-space. (Rheinallt Jones was puzzled: “Can’t make head or tails of it.”) In a court, or in a packed congregation, a gathering of the like-minded, people listen for the word that carries import. Such was also the same quiddity partly translatable as soul or spirit: *moya* or *mowa*, the voice of renewal after destruction, that “shall come from the ground like the voice of a ghost” and “whisper out of the dust,” as Moffat’s *Isaiah*, 29:4 foretold.

Percy applied to travel in South Africa, purportedly to see his grandfather Moroka’s grave. He hired a lawyer. After a series of colonial administrative errors, he was issued a pass to come to South Africa in 1939 and told, pointlessly enough, not to venture south of the Vaal River. He left Francistown with Samuel Mokgothu and other counselors on 18 January via third class rail. Further supporters met the men in Kimberley and brought Percy to Bloemfontein, where the Native Administration officials, taken by surprise, welcomed him as visiting royalty. On 5 February, the people ushered Percy into an auditorium, “Bantu Batho hall,” where he was introduced as being “on his way to Thaba Nchu.” As the Johannesburg newspaper, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, reported, Europeans were well represented:

On the stage, which was decorated with flags, were prominent members of the Barolong tribe; the chairman of locations, Mr. H. Solomon, the superintendent of locations, [and] his son (Protector of Natives, Mr. J. G. F. Moulst [of the Moulst law firm]) were vitally interested in this attempt to patch up old quarrels.⁴⁵

Hearing about his imminent arrival, the “acting” chief, John S. Moroka, complained to the assistant “Native Commissioner” in town that Kali John Matsheka and Elisha Ramagaga were stirring up trouble; but as Percy approached, Chief John softened, and he ended up welcoming the party sheepishly as he had in the past. Percy expressed joy at seeing “his children,” who shouted, “Pula, pula!” (“Rain, rain!”) to him. While further words of welcome and ceremony were spoken, orders went out to the Free State police to arrest Percy. The Bloemfontein magistrate was told to charge Percy with contravening the law debarring “tropical” workers. Instead, on his own authority, the judge merely cautioned Percy and gave him time to gather his things and depart.

Percy pretended to leave South Africa on 14 February, but he seems to have stayed in Kimberley and to have met with Kali John Matsheka in April or May. The plan was to bring Percy to Thaba Nchu in triumph, in the presence of the Anglican Bishop of Bloemfontein, who would install him as chief.

⁴⁵ BNA DCF 4/14, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, Johannesburg, 18/2/39, “Barolong Welcome Their ‘Lost’ Chief, by ‘Yolea.” See the correspondence with Native Commissioner J. P. Booysen in Pretoria, Lowe, J. S. Allison, and other officials, dated 12/10/38, 1/11/38, 6-7/12/38, 9/12/38; 20/12/38; 22/12/38; and 13-15/2/39, is in SAB, NTS 307, 1/54, the critical file earlier explored by Murray, *Black Mountain*.

God's blessing would go over the head of the Native Commissioner, showing how Percy's elevation was preordained to be. The staff-and-miter confirmation of the Samuelite chief was an appeal to the domain of ceremony created by missionaries and performed by thousands of African Christians for over sixty years, and an occupation of the imperial common ground of caste and aristocracy, pageantry and show.⁴⁶

Perhaps the BPA might have been expected to write to the Bishop using religious language, asking him to help them in the name of God. Matsheka and Soldaat did nothing of the sort, however, and instead wrote to him about history.

It is a wonder to march troops of soldiers into the Barolong Territory of Thabanchu that can be seen in annexure E proclamation of the 12 July 1884. The troops were marched to destroy *the grave of the chief* by cannons guns and ammunitions ... [to] take the Barolong Territory and sell it and to offer a portion of it to those who sided with the invaders.⁴⁷

The occupation and the destruction of the *actual* resting place of their ancestor (*modimo*), the kraal and central court where bodies lay, is what animated them. The betrayal was over their fathers' land. The letter closed with a bureaucratic legalism familiar to the upper tiers of dispossessed highveld peasants: "We shall be pleased if the messengers will send back the reply within a period 8 days."⁴⁸

The Bishop demurred: there would be no coronation. In July, Percy finally made his way back to Francistown and the Tati District. There he was warned sharply to keep to his "business."⁴⁹ Among the people left in Thaba Nchu in 1940, the farmworkers and peasant laborers, the homestead-heads clinging to land, there was only disappointment. We have several estimates of Samuelite sympathy around that time. Walter Fenyang thought about a third of the Caledon Valley's sharecroppers and farmhands were Samuelites. Dr. James Moroka thought "seventy percent" of them were, and wanted both Percy and the land.⁵⁰

After Percy left South Africa, the Barolong Progressive Association, the BPA, continued to work on behalf of the NAD in precincts far from Thaba Nchu town. When the Native Trust administration needed applications from Barolong at "Batho Location," in Bloemfontein, to live on soon to be "released" Native Trust lands, they again turned to the BPA. And so Matsheka, Soldaat, and Daniel Ngakantsi (of the venerable Ngakantsi line) dutifully sent out a

⁴⁶ David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁴⁷ SAB NTS 307 1/54, K. Matsheka to Bishop of Bloemfontein, 11/6/39, *my italics*.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, *sic* to "messengers."

⁴⁹ SAB NTS 307 1/54, Barolong Progressive Association [BPA] and Matsheka, SNAD (J. S. Allison) to GS-M, 1/5/39. Differing slightly with Murray, *Black Mountain*, 150-4, 172.

⁵⁰ SAB NTS 308 13/54, Ethnological inquiry, January 1941, Chiefship of Thaba Nchu Barolong, by N. J. van Warmelo.

BPA circular referring to “the Chief’s order.” The order stressed “peace[,] co-operation and love,” and then – most unexpectedly – called for a general, mass political assembly, a “Pico” (*pitso*): the open, general-participation forum (from *go bitsa*, to call or hail) reserved for state crises, designed to show the will of the people. The first in sixty years was to be held in the central Thaba Nchu court, on 13 February 1940.

Walter Fenyang did not approve of the idea. He later commented sourly that the three “respondents” (above) were “not of royal blood.”⁵¹ The BPA however touted “Moroka’s law,” not blood. The doors would be open to all. When Matsheka was asked, “what is meant by the Chief’s Order in the Notice, and who is this Chief?” he answered, “the Barolong Progressive Association. *This organization has its rules.*”⁵² The February meeting was canceled under pressure, but on 25 March, the BPA finally held the grand “Pico,” without Percy being able to attend. Four or five hundred men gathered together despite masters-and-servants contracts, pass laws, and the anti-assembly laws designed to discourage just such events.

At the meeting, after a prayer and a hymn, Matsheka said loudly, “I know there are Police here but nobody will arrest me. I have also been warned not to say anything about Chief Tshabadira [i.e., Percy], but Tshabadira is my chief and he is coming.” Just as Percy was coming, the people would occupy the land. “Several of you know that Chief Moroka is dead but there is a contract between President Brand and Chief Moroka which is still in force today,” Matsheka said. These were agitating words. “Moroka is dead but his laws remain.”⁵³ The gathered peasants cheered. Matsheka said that with monies recently collected, he had – already, in fact – bought the ground beneath their feet! *They* were (“You are ...”) the real “[T]rust.” They were the genuine “Barolong” and he had that information from unimpeachable sources. Indeed Matsheka insisted that he had access to superior imperial information, that the obstruction was this or that particular official in Thaba Nchu, not the “real” authority over them. “We should not listen to the rumours that this land was taken over and would not be restored to the Barolongs on account of Samuel. ... Samuel was tried and found not guilty,” it was announced. Contrary data were “rumours.” “The ground has been bought and released to you!” said another speaker. “You can occupy it whenever you like and you can also stock it.” Repeatedly the BPA leadership eschewed ethnicity. The land was open to all, “whether they be Basutos or Matebele as long as they obey the chief, the whole District ... is in the Barolong ground and boundaries have been defined as in the olden days ... private ownership of land is done away with.”⁵⁴

⁵¹ SAB NTS 307 1/54, “Vol. 2, Enquiry into the BPA,” 29/10/40, Fenyang.

⁵² SAB NTS 307 1/54, Barolong Progressive Association and Matsheka, Meeting, 1/2/40, my *italics*; and SAB NTS 308 13/54, J. P. Booysen to Native Commissioner, Pretoria, 19/6/40.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, all.

⁵⁴ VAB LTN 1/2/4 N.1/16/5, Enquiry, October 1940 (Daniel Ngakantsi), and VAB LTN 2/3/4 N.1/16/5, “Statement about the Pico held by the Barolong Progressive Association on the 25th

After the meeting, the BPA repeated that “Proclamation E” of 1884 (by President Brand) was “terminated” and that colonial authority should “vacate the territory ... together with the town and the Barolong who are opposing the Government.” As had the interwar popular movements, the BPA configured its opponents as the adversaries of just authority. The BPA directly asked Assistant Native Commissioner J.P. Booysen to leave Thaba Nchu “in 8 hours,” because, “all your deeds and actions have come to an end, *the Government* has now arrived.”⁵⁵ People began to graze their stock on the new Trust land without Trust permission, and Matsheka escalated Barolong demands. In a letter to the Chief Native Commissioner, the “Controller of Thaba Nchu Native Released Areas,” he wrote,

We ask you to notify the Government together with your people who do not love peace to make a definite decision seeing they driving at robbery and destroying human life. The Government of Grabbers and thieves has waxed fat on other people’s property.

Notify the Government, of the Government’s perfidy, because “the Government” has arrived. Matsheka wrote, “The land is ours and we are taking it. Let them [the Trust board] take away their stock at once, we are coming.”⁵⁶ Matsheka noted that the artificial chiefship in Thaba Nchu, funded by the Native Affairs Department, had already recognized Percy’s seniority.⁵⁷ Soldaat, Ramagaga, and Matsheka told the NAD they wished to exercise their right to bear arms and to buy ammunition, and they asked for food rations from the government “as is customary” so they could hold “continuous meetings.” Asserting their ownership of the land, the BPA Samuelites asked finally for “a force of Police” from the “Government,” so they could “sieve the Native office” (they wrote this directly to Rheinallt Jones at the South African Institute of Race Relations), and they could drive out its occupant, Booysen.⁵⁸

In April, the leaders of the BPA were arrested. We will return to their plight directly.

IN THE GREATNESS WE WERE PEOPLE OF ...

Sometime in the 1930s Isaac Schapera hit upon another, and very effective, mode of collecting household genealogies and lineage histories. He engaged schoolchildren, who were literate in written Sechuana, to write down their

Mar. 1940 at Ratlou location, Thaba Nchu.” Murray, *Black Mountain*, n. 65, 308, suggests, “probably written by Fenyang.”

⁵⁵ Ibid., BPA (Matsheka, Daniel Ngakantsi, and Soldaat) to John David Rheinallt Jones, and Same to RM-TN, 8/4/40, my *italics*.

⁵⁶ SAB NTS 307 1/54, BPA, 1 February 1940, calling for meeting on 13 February.

⁵⁷ Murray, *Black Mountain*, 152–3; and SAB NTS 307 1/54, Exhibit “B”, *Rex vs. Ramagaga and Two Others: Concerning Proclamation 252/1928*, Municipality of Bloemfontein, “surplus,” p. 3.

⁵⁸ Same SAB file as last note, notes of BPA meeting with RM-TN (Geard), Booysen, and Samuel, no date; and VAB LTN 2/3/4 N.1/16/5, BPA to RM-TN, 8/4/40.

family histories, paying each student a shilling.⁵⁹ Schapera then typed the essays up in an orthography he helped promulgate as “Setswana” (removed from Sesotho) and compared them, justifying their narratives with one another in the manner of Ellenberger before him. Schapera’s other accessible material consists of transcribed conversations, so the shilling essays occupy a unique niche. If it were desired to see the raw data behind Schapera’s construction of “the Tswana,” this is as close as we are likely to come.

The completed shilling homework assignments varied in length and content, but they were phrased consistently.

This is Tshosa court, we are children of Sebage of Tshosa the sons of Segokoto of Taatshwabi or Tshosa ... they left from the places of death the Tshosa ... and went to Morwakwene ...

Here is another:

The beginning of our people where they began is at Thakeng. When we began at Thakeng we were ... called boMabe [people of Mabe], we began with that name. The man who began boMabe the first, he is called Rampitse, it is he who began boMabe.

“We” and “they” are recalled by the names of past chiefs. Each we and they names groups whose size and purpose differed perhaps tremendously, and whose totems and locations also changed. Another shilling essay reads:

Us, we began being people of Ngwato, during that war of the Matebele and Ngwato, they were fought while we were there. Grandfather was Mathuba of Kgana of Makwafe of Selobilwe. Selobilwe who died at Serowe ... gave the court its name, Semana, after cattle [i.e., meaning “calves”].

There is often a beginning, a middle, and an end.⁶⁰

Bakaa are Barolong from their foundation. In the beginning they lived at Thaba Nchu, among the Barolong of Moroka where they are still. Then they divided. Tseme, the younger child of the kingship split with his elder brother Rapulana because of discord between them. Then chief Tsewe died, the chiefship was taken by Magogowe a Tsewe. They moved to Mathebe, and build at the mountain of Mannyelong.⁶¹

Or consider:

We were originally Batlhaping [people of the place of fish] of Maida court, our people washed in fresh milk, not water. We parted with other Batlhaping at Thaba Nchu ... went east to Bokalaka [the Zimbabwe plateau] ... fought against Mfashwa [or Mswazwi and] we became their servants ... and took the [name] of the Bapedi.

These micro-histories hardly establish the homogeneous bona fides of perennial tribes. Instead they reveal the primacy of compromise and amalgamation

⁵⁹ Botswana historian Barry Morton informed me of this trove in 1990.

⁶⁰ Cf. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 135, and passim.

⁶¹ BNA, Papers of Isaac Schapera, PP1/4/4 Amos K. Pilane, July 1943.

in the real historical politics of the highveld. Only the hegemony of particular patrifocal narratives enables chiefly legitimacy to be traced far back into the past.

Once it was in the greatness that the people of those-of-father-Marobela [batho boora-Marobela] were people of the crocodile, but they split with the people of the crocodile in a war, they fought over beast, so that the people of father Marobela [as above] went to the place of the people of Kalaka [Kalanga].⁶²

Or:

Once upon a time a while ago our fathers were of the place of the person-of-crocodile, the court was called that of Kgaimena. Then person-of-crocodile came out and severed with him.⁶³

Instances like these can be considered moments in which renewal was grasped in a commonly understood idiom: "I am not crocodile" in the above view. But the actual history in the shilling essays is far from a transparent record of ethnic amalgamations and patrilineal segmentations:

The nation of Tobane was called the people of Tlokwa. They had left the south, being the people of Tlokwa of Tshaka [Shaka], the chief was Tshaka, he had two aunts [fathers' sisters], their names were Madidimale and Radikganyane. They split up with their eldest due to a lack of understanding. And when they had split with their eldest [*mogolo*], they left the Transvaal for Mafikeng. Madidimale was a blind person, she matured, but she died at Mafikeng. She had a child named Mokgosi [Mr. Chief], her father died and her child Mokgosi started to rule. He lived with his aunt Radikganyane and her nation was the people of Tlokwa.⁶⁴

Such history is often about jumping backward through ancestors by whose names enterprising men, at different moments, designated collectivities.

The people of Talaote are people of Nyai, being they the people of Swena. The name the people of Nyai was the one they respected. When the people of Talaote came onto this earth, the chief had two wives. In one yard was born the boy with the name Monemapee. He was born first but he was of a small [junior] yard. In the big yard, there was born a child named Tlholwe. He was the one who ate the inheritance and became chief. Then his father died. When he died there was a meeting to put a chief on the stool, and as their custom was when you put a chief on the stool he is baptized in the river, they did that.⁶⁵

As these historical texts are put side by side, their subject slowly comes into view. It is, very often, a transethnic subject.

We, Mosojanis came from Thabanchu, whilst still Barolong, and our totem was Iron (Tshipi). We came and domiciled at the junction of Shashi and Ramaquabana. We were at the time together with the people of Makulukusa, and Mpenko's people. We

⁶² Ibid., PP2/1/3 Vernacular Texts, 1940, Ngwato, Kalaka, Mabothe Lobang, October 1940.

⁶³ Ibid., Onewang, Chichana, October 1940.

⁶⁴ Ibid., M. B. Mooketse, "Tobane."

⁶⁵ Ibid., Ditso tsa Batalaote, by Motalaote Lekhutlile (Setswana).

settled at a hill called Dithidza. We were under the chieftainship of Nmakwali as he had the control of the country ... [who] begot Lobeke and we was [*sic*] Nizwabungwe. We were now “Bahumbe” and our totem [was] Pupute which is Tjibelu (Bird) instead of (Tshipi) which is our totem) [*sic*] when we praise (Tjibelu) [*sic*] we call ourselves Bahumbe” [*sic*] From this place we removed to Nzende ... [we were] scattered by the Matebele [in the 1830s?].⁶⁶

If the “we” of these narratives was not ethnic, and has otherwise to be named, surely it was “ancestor(s),” *modimo/badimo* of the schoolchildren’s mostly paternal history. Far from living only as spirits or shades, they survive in the context of vital arrangements of men and women on the ground.

Schapera discovered that most patriarchs in a given settlement bore ancestral identifications that differed from the chief’s, or that had changed over time into something else. He used the accounts to build descent-trees: one people split and became two peoples; he composed summaries from them. Ultimately Schapera repackaged the histories collected as of and about tribes.⁶⁷ They are “history,” *dico* in Schapera’s London Missionary Society–derived orthography, but following the missionary A. J. Wookey, *dico* (*ditso*) from *go tswa*, to come out from, is translated as “tribes” and “history,” making the two ideas synonyms. Schapera showed how a complex history had created what he called Tswana tribes and related that history was still shaping them, and he declared tribes themselves preeminently “political” structures. Nonetheless, he stuck to the tribal framework based on descent. Seemingly ineluctably, for him, “the basic unit in Bantu political life is the tribe.”⁶⁸

Between the 1840s and the 1930s, in South Africa, Basutoland (Lesotho) and even the Bechuanaland Protectorate, notwithstanding the shilling essays cited above, the ancestors of the highveld were spiritualized and sacralized.⁶⁹ They were invoked in “customary practices” and reinterpreted as transcendental beings who had always (it was thought) been venerated in pre-Christianity days. Schapera immortalized these transformations as preexisting conditions in his ethnography. Early on, while in the field, he remarked that what most “impressed” him was that this ancestor-worship was *gone*, but that “magic,” otherwise, continued in so many walks of life. “Although the old tribal ancestor-worship has been well-nigh completely displaced by Christianity, magic still flourishes very strongly.” Schapera intuited the centrality of a past practice – pre-Christian worship – by its *absence* amid other behaviors he thought were based on beliefs. It *had been* important, had been “perhaps the most

⁶⁶ D. Kousu, in Isaac Schapera, ms. version of “Land Tenure in the Tati District” [a 1943 report], with Dr. Thornton, in DCF 7/24, also giving the names of the five subcourts or wards under Moroka at Ramakgwebana [alt. Ramaquabana].

⁶⁷ Isaac Schapera, “Notes on the Early History of the Kwena (BaKwena бага Sechele),” reprinted in *Botswana Notes and Records*, 12 (1980), 83.

⁶⁸ Both quotes: Schapera, “Political Institutions,” 173.

⁶⁹ BNA Z. K. Matthews material, Box A, “Death and Burial,” Z. K. Matthews’s field notes, 9/1/36; thanks to John L. Comaroff for copies of other Z. K. Matthews field notes on people of Tshidi and the original reference.

conspicuous element in Bantu religion,” because, he thought, it was replaced by religious practices he could directly observe.⁷⁰

In Schapera’s substantial *Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom*, made for the British Protectorate administration, every facet of the tribesman’s life is learnable, knowable, repeatable. Even his “politics” were customary, so enumerated in the *Handbook*, because tribal life only transpired within imperial relations of power. Schapera’s treatment was briefly part of an even grander standardization of knowledge about Africa as a governable place, a “Restatement of African Law” conceived along the same lines as the massive *International Area Files* ethnographic data base established at Yale. *Law and Custom* survived all that, and even recently could be found in general use in southern Africa as a reference guide and primer.⁷¹

Schapera was no Segregationist. By the 1940s the Volkekundiges had retreated into a formulation of Bantu culture as a grab bag of ossified ideas supposedly reformable through education. Schapera’s understanding in contrast made room for power, and his progressive political orientation was genuine. At the same time, his understanding of tribe prevented him from making a radical break with the work of his Segregationist colleagues. Thus G. P. Lestrade wrote that the “Chwana” division of the “Suto-Chwana Speaking group” was “organized in tribes.” While at once, it was “necessary to make clear to ourselves at the outset ... that a tribe is a political unit owing allegiance to a chief,” Lestrade said, the varieties of men among “the Bantu” were nonetheless distinguishable in sight “by the practiced eye” and in sound “by the practiced ear,” like species of animals.⁷² Schapera embraced a linguistic descent tree behind his ethnic categories, taking Sotho (i.e., Basuto, Basotho) as his master category. The highveld was to be divided into Tswana (“Western Sotho”), Sotho proper (i.e., the domain of the French Protestant missionaries and Chief Moshoeshe), and third, Transvaal or “Eastern Sotho.” Not only was this ahistorical, but the Western Sotho or Tswana “group,” especially, “strongly objected” (noted P.-L. Breutz) to being termed Sotho in any way; moreover the modifiers Southern, Northern, and Eastern, were imprecise, “mainly geographical, but also cultural and historical.”⁷³

Schapera further cautioned, a “tribe is not a closed group like a clan. It is an *association* into which people may be born, or which they may voluntarily

⁷⁰ Quotes from Kuper, “Isaac Schapera”; also shown in Isaac Schapera, “Christianity and the Tswana,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 88, 1 (1958), 1–9.

⁷¹ Isaac Schapera, *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938), e.g. 63, 69, 84, 124, etc. Martin Chanock, *The Making of South African Legal Culture, 1902–1936: Fear, Favor, and Prejudice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 129; Rebecca Lemov, “The Dream as Data and the Dream of Data: American Anthropology’s Search for a Total Data Set, 1942–1961,” unpublished paper, May 23, 2009, about the International Area Files project.

⁷² Robert Gordon, “Apartheid’s Anthropologists: The Genealogy of Afrikaner Anthropology,” *American Anthropologist*, 15, 3 (August 1988), 535–53; G. P. Lestrade, “Some Notes on the Ethnic History of the Bavenda and Their Rhodesian Affiliates,” *South African Journal of Science*, 24 (1927), 492; and Lestrade, “Some Notes on the Political Origin of the Bechwana,” *South African Journal of Science*, 25 (1928), 427–32.

⁷³ Isaac Schapera, *The Tswana* (London: International Africa Institute, 1953), e.g., x–xii, 50.

join,” or by which they are conquered, or enter by some other avenue. “The tribe” had no homogeneous character; it meant “the body of people organized under the rule of an independent chief.”⁷⁴ Warning against the implications of tribe, Schapera nonetheless held onto it, inevitably differentiating between “core” tribal wards and (within them) blood relations and non-associating royalty with tribal authenticity. One understood the Ngwato or the Bamalete, or the BaKgatla ba ga Kgafela; one spoke of “important tribal occasions,” not public assemblies; one wrote, “in many of the tribes, further, there was a special ‘tribal’ horn,” with no referent for the quotation marks. Furthermore one read that “the Bechuana had” large towns, or “the Tswana had” rainmaking activities, as traits. There were the “big five” super-ethnicities in South Africa: Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, Sotho, Venda, each with distinguishable attributes. The Tswana was the one without a Rain Queen, or strange medicine men, or the perennial shield and assegai. Minus such distinguishing features, he was, instead, the prototypical South African tribesman.

Of Schapera’s works, *The Ethnic Composition of Tswana Tribes* was based most clearly on the shilling essays Schapera continued to collect during the War. It was delayed and published only in 1952, in a poor-quality typescript font. It is devoted to mapping all individual household identities in most of the Protectorate. The notion that the book is a social science explanation of some kind, and not (say) a directory or census, lies in its ethnic nature: each section and subordinated village is given its own tribal label. Each is also tied in complex ways to history and lore that Schapera himself was, even then, publishing. Perhaps because of Schapera’s consolidation of his own views with those of highveld patriarchs, no métis or Khoe-identified patrilineages appear in his tribes. For instance, even though plenty of Khoe-speakers and métis, men and women, contributed talent and genes to the people of Seleka, and even though many “Seleka” towns had a Khoe-speaking quarter, Schapera’s data does not allow them to be seen. But he does show quite clearly that highveld people were as mixed as sausages at their societal centers, from a “tribal” point of view. Thus Moroka’s “the Seleka,” as a tribe, is in *Ethnic Composition* made of wards called Rrapulana, Sehuba, and Modibowa (all also identified as “Rolong,” treated by Schapera as a genealogical designation); further, there was the synechdochic “Seleka” ward and court supplying the name; then there were Kubung, Hurutshe, Kwena, “Kwena-Kalaka” from the “Ngwato,” Phiring [Wolf’s-place], Tlokwa, and Kgalagadi wards (the latter named “ancestor,” *modimo*).⁷⁵ Similarly particularized layouts were discovered for other tribes. In all of them Schapera reveals his decoded highveld

⁷⁴ Both quotes: “Political Institutions,” in Schapera, *The Bantu-Speaking Tribes of South Africa*, 173.

⁷⁵ Isaac Schapera, *Ethnic Composition of Tswana Tribes* (London: London School of Economics, 1952), 125; see G. Mautle, “The Bakgalagadi–Bakwena Relationship: A Case of Slavery, ca. 1840–1930,” *Botswana Notes and Records*, 18, 1 (1986), 19–31.

to be a field of endless, untranslated fractal segments of other places, marked by men's names. In seeing precolonial tribal societies with Schapera, these names became opaque signifiers at the center of subjectivity: irreducible, primordial components of the self. The African is seen as made organically of his history, not as living with it.

It happens that just as Schapera was collecting information on "the Seleka tribe," for inclusion in his *Ethnic Composition*, a last flash of political agitation came from the Barolong Progressive Association (BPA) Samuelites. Even as they prepared to go to trial in a magistrate's court, they called one more time for "Moroka's laws" to be extended to all "Barolong," or to all "Moroka's people," regardless of tribe. Yet before the colonial authority, they argued that because tribesmen were by definition incapable of political activity, much as Schapera's work suggested, they had broken no Segregationist laws.

ABOUT THE LAND: IS THAT A POLITICAL MATTER, OR ...?

The BPA Samuelites, Matsheka and company, were charged with violating Proclamation 252 of 1928, within Section 25(1) issued under the Native Administration Act no. 38 of 1927, which prohibited the assembly of more than ten people *unless* for religious purposes or the discussion of the domestic affairs of a particular "kraal." The BPA purported to reflect the interests of the descendents of all those who came with or joined Moroka in Thaba Nchu a century before, and they used techniques of assembly we have already noted in past historical eras.⁷⁶ They argued in court that they had not met in contravention of the law, however, because their affairs were merely "domestic ones." In other words they had no "political" agenda, and they could not, because they were not speaking about the land, just about tribal matters. They understood by now that touching on land in any way would hinder their case.

Simultaneously the Native Affairs Department (NAD) undertook to bring a new chief, Albert Setlogelo Moroka, up from obscurity and enstool him as chief of the Barolong at Thaba Nchu. Albert had been sweeping stables at Hammond & Co. in New Doornfontein when he was located, and an earlier conviction for stock theft was overturned. The BPA at Thaba Nchu refused to recognize Albert as the real chief. Nonetheless they claimed to the court that their "Pico," their mass meeting, was nonpolitical and had discussed only "affairs of the kraal," and that "kraal" indicated "domestic" issues, not "foreign" ones. How big could a kraal be and remain "domestic": might matters touch the chiefship? Cross examined, Matsheka said yes, by "kraal I mean a *staat* [state], a location consists of many kraals but the main kraal consists of the house of the Chief." And by this was meant Percy, not Albert.

The tribe of the chief was invited but nobody else. ... I am a Barolong. ... The discussion was in regard to the administration of this tribe. [Percy] Tshabadira is the

⁷⁶ SAB NTS 307 1/54, BPA to Native Trust, 1/4/40; Kholberg, "notice of appeal," 12/6/40.

grandson [*sic*] of old Chief Moroka. I agree that the meeting was for official administrative purposes. There were no foreign politics or foreign affairs of the Barolong tribe discussed, but the household affairs of the tribe.⁷⁷

This play on “foreign ... household” (or “domestic”) was repeated later on. It should also be noted that Ramagaga commenced by insisting that, as they began with a prayer, and “a prayer is religious,” the meeting might *itself* be considered a religious meeting. But this line of argumentation was soon abandoned.

The BPA expressed the idea to its Barolong constituents that the act of “bringing” Percy Tshabadira from Tati District to Thaba Nchu was itself (“Whisper!”) inevitable, and, as it restored a genuine “Barolong” chiefdom in the Caledon Valley, would therefore rid the Valley of “private land.” The BPA’s argument to its listeners asserted the central importance of the paradigmatic Bantu House, and metonymically the court of the chiefship, which would accommodate any comers who believed as they did. In contrast, in its defense *before the state*, in court, the BPA held that because segmentary societies were the same at any scale, all of them tribes, their concerns always remained those of domestic space. They were interested only in the “household affairs of the kraal of Moroka,” in other words, no matter that its constituents numbered in the tens of thousands. Ramagaga thus referred in his summary to “the Moroka tribe” and concluded: “There is only one house of Moroka here.”⁷⁸ Recognizing the legitimacy of the state, how could a tribal matter be political? the BPA argued. Tribes were domesticated – tamed – entities, by the state’s own definition, and so they were within the law in their public meetings.

Judge J. Coetzee rejected their arguments and found them guilty as charged. Their lawyers appealed the case to a higher Free State court on 4 July 1940. In upholding Coetzee’s verdict, Judge-President P. Fischer strategically dissented from the binary opposition the BPA had posed. In other words, accusing the BPA of political behavior, the court neither took the state-tribe divide as uncrossable, nor conceded their mutual participation in the political sphere when discussing chiefly affairs. In service of this logic, Judge Fischer created a third tier, the semipolitical “nation.” He observed, “There seems to be in the mind of the legislature some distinction between a particular kraal and the nation as a whole,” which described the Barolong better than “tribe.” Judge Fischer made this distinction even though *natie* in Afrikaans is given as “tribe.” He said Moroka’s dominion reached this level, “nation,” as it consisted of “a certain native territory occupied by the Barolong,” and that the BPA’s threatening posture could “only bring the nation ... into trouble.”

The “Native Administration” men pretended they had nothing to do with Albert’s appearance in Thaba Nchu, lying, and installed him as “chief.” In

⁷⁷ Murray, *Black Mountain*, 147; SAB NTS 307 1/54, Ordinary Jurisdiction, no. 161 of 1940, *The King vs. Elijah Ramagaga, Kali John Matsheka, and Jeremiah Soldaat*, 14/5/1940.

⁷⁸ SAB NTS 307 1/54, Ordinary Jurisdiction, no. 161 of 1940, *The King vs. Elijah Ramagaga, Kali John Matsheka, and Jeremiah Soldaat*, 14/5/1940, p. 11.

such moments one notes critical elements in the Apartheid future: the recourse to form, the heedlessness, the denial of authorship.⁷⁹ There were other signs of the world to come. As Dr. James Moroka testified that the great majority of Thaba Nchu Barolong – declared a “nation” in court – looked to Samuel as their chief, the Minister of Native Affairs received a wedding invitation for “Seleka” Chief Albert Setlogelo Moroka’s marriage, on behalf of “The Barolong Race.” In Bloemfontein, Kali John Matsheka of the BPA was found guilty of contravening segregationist law. He was exiled to the Witsieshoek Native Reserve, itself a hotbed of protest politics, and then (in January of 1941) to a farm in the Pokwane area of Middleburg, in the Transvaal, under chief Sekoati or (Sekwati) Mampuru.

Matsheka’s last extant communication was sent to the magistrate in Thaba Nchu. The brief note recollected the highveld’s nearly forgotten idiom, a unity Westerners had never fully understood. In it chief, self, ancestor, and God briefly became one, before dissolving again in defeat.⁸⁰

I am not wandering out of the road: as you are serving under a Government which does as it pleases, the soul will arise and depart from the body. As there is no refuge for the body, the Government will therefore do as it likes with it; it may choose to burn it with fire. I am writing this note as one who is conquered; things have come to an end.

As he had “no fixed abode,” as the official annotation reads, it was only by the interventions of Dr. Moroka that he was permitted to end his exile and return, in his infirmity, to Thaba Nchu.⁸¹

The Bechuanaland Protectorate government at that point asked Professor Isaac Schapera to write about the Tati District’s “Natives,” and about the carrying capacity of their Native Reserve in the northern part of the District. Barolong were still draining away from Matsiloje and the Reserve, lowering the population from 1,093, total, in 1936, down to 862 in 1943, but their livestock and the poor quality of the land apparently made even this number unupportable. Schapera’s wartime report on the Tati District underlined how these “Tswana” were no longer able to live in the manner he had depicted for them in *The Bantu-Speaking Tribes of South Africa*. He recommended improving the situation by opening up further land for habitation in Nata, to which Barolong opposed moving, or by restricting Barolong cattle’s grazing

⁷⁹ Convicted 10/10/21 after arrest with an older man selling a beast at Tweespruit, SAB NTS 13/54 *ibid*; and Native Commissioner J. M. Brink to Director of Native Labour, 29/10/40; and Acting Director of Native Labour to SNAD, Pretoria, 5/11/40; M. S. W. Kalane, *Botsbelo jwa ga Kgosi Albert S. Moroka* (Pietermaritzburg: Shooter and Shuter, 1991) makes no mention of this. Albert held office from 1941 to 1955.

⁸⁰ SAB NTS 307 1/54, vol. 2: K. J. Matsheka, b. 1869, d. November 1948: Amos Tlale Matsheka to SNAD, Pretoria, 16/3/1948; Native Commissioner, Thaba Nchu, to CNC, Pochefstroom, 17/9/48; SAB SRP 1951, 6/422, “Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Disturbances in the Witsieshoek Native Reserve,” Cape Town, 1951 (i.e., 10/11/51, etc.)

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Amos Tlale Matsheka, above file.

territory.⁸² The Protectorate administration asked the Tati Company without effect to rent them more land, and suspended all immigration. Then they removed most of the Barolong's cattle from the District.⁸³ The Protectorate's internal summary of Schapera's findings about Tati was dark. "The Reserve is a dying area ... the people are dying out like their land is dying."⁸⁴

In a minor aside Schapera noted something unusual about the remaining Barolong. "A surprising amount of the young men [in Tati District] are unmarried, as compared with other tribes." Indeed, reproduction was not feasible. Barolong men remained hopeful of a new dispensation in Matsiloje for far too long, even after the possibility had been rendered remote. Their cattle gone, their lands restricted, they had no means to marry. They were no longer pragmatists, realists. Instead, among those who did not vacate the Tati District, one found fervent Christians. Matsheka died in Thaba Nchu in 1948, the same year the National Party attained power with its platform of Apartheid.

POSTSCRIPT: THE PROPHET MOKALENG

Jacob Motswaosele, the future prophet, was not unusual for a Tati District man, according to Schapera: he was a still-unmarried rural fellow in his late twenties, baptized at birth, struggling through the ruinous crescendo of inter-war popular politics, and finding no earthly reward. When he *did* finally marry, at the age of twenty-eight – a young woman baptized as Martha – he immediately left Matsiloje and went off to work. Like many other men, Jacob spent the entire 1930s away from his rural home, coming back only when he could no longer earn a paycheck.

The lore of the surviving church that Jacob Motswaosele subsequently founded in 1955, the Spiritual Healing Church, chooses to remember his leadership in Christian affairs as grounded in his earlier life in Matsiloje.

⁸² BNA, DC F. 7/13, Schapera to Lawrenson, 18/843; DC F. 9/11, District Commissioner, Francistown, to General Manager, Tati Company, 11/9/51. No chief in the District agreed to move to Nata (central Botswana): see F. Jeffress Ramsay, Barry Morton, and P. Themba Mgadla, *Building a Nation: A History of Botswana from 1800 to 1910* (Gaborone: Longman, 1996), 233, for background.

⁸³ Percy Moroka lost 833 head. Schapera arranged to have Chief Tshekedi Khama of Serowe take custody of their cattle, to merge with his cattle already grazing the banks of the Shashi. BNA DCF 7/13, Schapera to Laurenson, Gaborone's, 18/8/1943; Map Appendix 1, 1943 Government Veterinary Offices, Francistown, to District Commissioner, Francistown (hereafter DC-F), 22/10/43; H. J. Rundle to DC-F, 16/11/45.

⁸⁴ Schapera listed eleven ethnic components among the Barolong of Tati and also noted that Kalanga-speakers made up 75 percent of the region's population, BNA, DCF 7/14, Schapera, "Native Land in the Tati District: A Confidential Document," 1943; and 7/14, "Land Tenure, Tati District, Schapera and Thornton Report," 1943; GS-M to J. W. Potts, 13/7/43; Resident Commissioner to DC-F, 29/5/43; and GS-M to DC-F, 27/6/43; BNA, DCF 7/13, GS-M to DC-F 7/5/44; Tapela, "The Tati District," 121. The redacted version of Schapera's findings was published as Isaac Schapera, "The Native Land Problem in the Tati District," *Botswana Notes and Records*, 3 (1971), 219–68.

Jacob had been one of the young people possessed by the “Holy Spirit” in 1923. The legend of this possession grew within at least one (and possibly two or three) regional, independent Apostolic churches. Its configuration in memory included some venerable tropes: mountains, ancestor-attuned experts, young people mobilizing in devotion to a chief. Thus it is said that when Samuel called the children to his court, they fled “to a nearby hilltop” because they feared being beaten, and when Jacob finally returned to Matsiloje, he retreated to a nearby hilltop; this is what diviners and other specialists used to do, too.

The 1923 episode of possession has a central place in the narrative repeated for visitors inquiring in the Spiritual Healing Church.

Even they themselves [the youths of 1923] did not know what was going on with them, they were preaching the Word of God, some were crying but without knowing what it was.... [They ate] cobs of maize, each of them was given one ... the Spirit told them to. They only drank ordinary water. They were singing hymns.

The symbolic references to “cobs of maize” or ears of (Indian) corn point to the *Gospel of Matthew*, where Jacob and his contemporaries wished to root their church. They aimed its history backward in place, over time, to the God of the New Testament. Matthew’s text transforms the devoted youths into apostles. Matthew 12:1 tells that Jesus’ disciples picked ears of corn on the Sabbath, and that the Pharisees, representing the conservative Jewish opposition, rebuked Christ for it, but that the corn-eaters acted rightly in their formal violation. Younger men who took and ate others’ corn: this was indeed a historical feature of military mobilizations, as we have seen. Their assertion of cosmic Right, must be joined finally to *Matthew*’s famous passage about intergenerational tension, Matthew 10:34–7: “I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.... I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother ... and a man will find his enemies under his own roof.” The immediate *sense* of being made new accompanied the demand that it be so. The youths did not issue a manifesto or form a military alliance but expressed their sentiments clearly enough nevertheless, given the constraints of their situation.

Indeed they could not act to transform the world. They dealt with neither spears and guns, nor with charms, idols, or potions: they drank only “ordinary” water. Over the years, Jacob Motswaosele and two other of their number, the oldest of the affected, continued to worship and pray with the preacher Harry Morolong, who had moved to Bloemfontein to found a new congregation. After Jacob left the Free State for the Rand, he saw Martha only occasionally, enough for her to bear children by him. He was maimed in an accident and lost the use of his right hand. He was troubled by “dreams and visions” in Johannesburg, and he went to consult with the famous Christian leader, Christinah Nku, of the St. John’s Apostolic church, to ask her for advice. Jacob told Pastor Nku he felt as if someone were “calling him.” Nku told him to heed the call and take up “the work of the Spirit,” as the ailing

needed him.⁸⁵ He returned home to Matsiloje, and when he had settled in, he promulgated his name as *Mokaleng*, a colloquialism meaning “the prophet,” claiming to have been divinely inspired.

Percy remained the Tati Samuelite Barolong chief, but he stayed up north in the Native Reserve, far from Matsiloje and much farther, of course, from Thaba Nchu, where most Barolong still lived. After the ban on recruiting “tropicals” as workers was rescinded, the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, or Wenela, erected a bus shelter near the railway siding at Moroka’s “Stadt” in the Tati Native Reserve. Percy, who liked to take a drink, came down this well-trodden route once in a while and stayed at the beerhall, not in Samuel’s old house. His successors did not move back down to Matsiloje, either, but instead stayed closer to their cattle in the grazing lands to the north. It was in Matsiloje, that half-abandoned and waterless town without a strong central court, that Jacob Motswaoesele, as Mokaleng, made his reputation.

It was around this time that Mokaleng first entered the Francistown District Commissioner’s horizons. In 1951 the office asked several local Christians in good standing in the establishment churches what they thought of Mokaleng, and was surprised to learn that he was a positive influence, a “man who goes around urg[ing people] to attend their respective churches with good result.” When chief Godfrey Moroka was threatened with prison for stealing livestock in 1960, the delegation sent to bargain for his release included a Methodist pastor (Makgothi), other prominent lords, and Jacob Motswaoesele, the Prophet Mokaleng. His stature wove together the old confluence of Christianity and chiefly power.

According to his passport application, however, while Jacob Motswaoesele was chaplaining his own church in 1960, it was based in Bloemfontein in the Free State where he had worshipped with Harry Morolong. His organization claimed to be rooted in the “Middle” Valley, the Free State farmlands of his ancestors, not in Tati. Second, Mokaleng called this church the “Apostolic United Faith Coloured Church,” claiming “Coloured” as opposed to “Bantu” or “Barolong” as a modifier. Jacob and Esau Lesabe, Motswaoesele’s long-time Christian co-worshippers, were twin brothers of recognized métis ancestry, as was K. J. Matsheka, and very likely Samuel himself. We have already noted the breadth of the gray area between “Coloured” and “Barolong” in the long history of the highveld, a gray area Mokaleng no doubt wished to enter in order to find some security for the claimed ownership of ecclesiastic land in Bloemfontein. When the authorities objected to “Coloured,” however, Motswaoesele dropped the word and called it the “Apostolic United Faith Healing Church of South Africa.” It developed in Tati District and after 1960

⁸⁵ Lepers, tertiary syphilitics: BNA DCF 1/4, DC-F to GS-M, 7/12/42; Julie Livingston, *Debility and the Moral Imagination in Botswana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005); “Calling him”: Rachel Frieson, “A History of the Spiritual Healing Church in Botswana,” M.A. Thesis, University of Toronto, Toronto School of Theology, 1990; and Frieson, *Ditso tsa Kereke ya Spiritual Healing*, private printing, 1990, 14–16, and interviews, Landau Int. with Jacob Motswaoesele (Jr.), 26/11/97.

Mokaleng renamed it the Spiritual Healing Church, or SHC. Almost at once it suffered a split, but Mokaleng's son perpetuated the SHC in Matsiloje, and eventually outside Tati as well.⁸⁶

Substituting for Matsheka's "word" (the one that anoints a chief), the SHC focused and focuses on the utterance and reception of the Word – to members, visitors, outpatients, and blessings-seekers. The SHC like other Pentecostal churches preaches that the end of the world is coming and a new millennium of grace and purity will soon unfold; in the meantime, individuals can achieve personal wellness.

The grandchildren of the nineteenth-century Christian peasants of the highveld looked to Christianity for one thing and to political organizations in the cities, led by the educated grandchildren of Cape Colony Africans, for another. As the country's population moved increasingly to the cities during and after World War II, the seat of protest shifted decisively to the worksite and the sidewalk. It is usually thought that the ANC initiated a turn away from the tribal and toward the national in the discourse of popular opposition. As we have seen, however, people's popular politics themselves enclosed a nonethnic tradition of alliance, ancestry, and interaction. By the same token, as Robin Kelley and Alan Cobley have shown, the cadences and formulations of church Christianity sometimes rang out in nationalists' meetings in unexpected ways. Performative Christianity colored the rhetoric of even the Communist Party.⁸⁷ Some South Africans were able to preserve their hopes by locking them into their churches, where they had a bit of freedom to talk and exhort one another. What was kept there was forever flavored with the gestures and tones of Christianity, its expiations and water-healings: its weaknesses as well as its undoubted strengths. Other South Africans never left their rural traditions of mobilization, shifting juvenile rankings and initiations into peer-group dances and "faction fights," and then stepping ahead of the ANC's urban leadership in turning to violent resistance against the state in the late 1950s. In Thaba Nchu's Seliba reserve, disaffected Samuelites, opposed to cattle culling, radicalized their branch of the ANC. In opposition to the leadership in Thaba Nchu town under Fenyang and Goronyane, they rejected the "Tswana"-ization of land and demanded to perpetuate their venerable respect for ethnic pluralism.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ P. Landau, Interview with Jacob Motswaosele (Jr.), Matsiloje, 21/11/97, with Julie Livingston; SAB, NTS 10429, 12/450, Motswaosele (to Bantu Administration, Pretoria), Francistown, 14/7/60. Rachel Frieson, *A History*, 20. Some of this material on the SHC appeared first in Landau, "The Spirit of God, Pigs, and Demons."

⁸⁷ For instance, Robin D. G. Kelley, "The Religious Odyssey of African Radicals: Notes on the Communist Party of South Africa, 1921–34," *Radical History Review*, 51 (1991), 4–24; Alan Gregor Cobley, *Class and Consciousness: The Black Petty Bourgeoisie in South Africa, 1924 to 1950* (New York: Greenwood, 1990).

⁸⁸ After the formation and failure of an "only Tswana" rural "village," Selossha, refugees in the 1960s and 1970s poured into Onverwacht, which became the huge rural slum of Botshabelo in the 1980s and was joined to the "homeland" of Bophuthatswana; Murray, *Black Mountain*, 170–4; Wylie, *Starving on a Full Stomach*, 137–53, on the discourse of "race deterioration."

Nationalist organizations, however, were not burdened by the nomenclature of state-negotiated subjectivities, which now registered entirely as tribes – Barolong, Basuto, Batlhaping, BaHurutshe, BaTaung, BaSeleka, BaKgafela, and so on. Nor, mostly, did they speak of chiefs. Their strength was to operate on the biggest playing field, the one staffed by the imperial guard. They laid claim to all South Africa, not parts therein. They aimed to cross clear to the other side of the citizen–subject divide, to structure the state, to find access to its helm. Dr. James Moroka became the president of the Congress for a time, redeploying his broad sympathies with the Samuelites toward the pursuit of the nationalist project.

In 1960, nonetheless, Chief Madikizela’s Mpondoland rose in revolt, seeking to reestablish proper chiefship against the defaulted and compromised Apartheid “chief.” The rising both heralded the new violence of rural and then urban resistance, and catalyzed the shift to Grand Apartheid and the politics of bantustans’ phony self-rule. The denouement of the Barolong Samuelites played itself out far more quietly, winding down in Tati’s rural hamlets and falling into a small classical twin-courts partnership. In Tati’s Native Reserve, Chief Godfrey Moroka partnered with “Bishop” Ephraim Moyo, a close kinsman of the Reverend Johane Masowe, the leader of the “Apostolic Sabbath Church of God,” in 1960. Chief Godfrey welcomed Bishop Moyo and about 140 members of his Zimbabwe-linked “church,” a transnational society also called “the Korsten Basket Makers” after one stage of their history spent at Korsten in the Cape. Godfrey allowed Moyo to settle near him by Moroka’s village, recognizing that they shared a belief in the A/ancestor, and buying himself immediate support.⁸⁹ The Masowe-ites’ aim was to establish residency in the Bechuanaland Protectorate by paying tax there so they could immigrate into South Africa. Godfrey agreed to issue them tax receipts – in direct violation of the District Commissioner’s orders – if they would pay their tax through him, recognizing his seniority.

By allowing the Masowe-ites to settle with him, Chief Godfrey also transgressed the supposedly important ethnic boundary between “Tswana” and “Shona,” but this is just as had been the case in the past, as we have seen. The Masowe-ites’ founding members were originally from the Manyika and Zezuru districts in Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) and spoke Shona, which is closely related to Kalanga, the dominant language of the Tati District. Yet they did not blend in with the region’s Kalanga chiefdoms, who were their co-lingual, ethnic cousins; they allied with the Barolong chiefdom. Some people speculated that Godfrey had other less accessible motives for his partnership with the Masowe-ites, that he had accepted a bribe from Moyo, or that Moyo was having an affair with his wife. There were venerable fraternal precedents for that, too.

The drive to unify, according to shared highveld principles, survived among common people well into the twentieth century, albeit almost entirely

⁸⁹ Landau, “The Spirit of God,” and Interviews in Matsiloje, 1998.

in encrypted and altered form. The push toward meaningful subjectivity, denied land, chiefs, and legitimacy, did not just dry up but overflowed barriers put in its path and entered discourses about propriety, the millennium, Salvation, and physical wellness. “In Botswana,” the Prophet Mokaleng’s son commented to me, recognizing the ineluctable nature of the single playing field, “the chiefs did not like this type of praying.” Up in the Tati “Reserve,” Moyo, if no longer Godfrey, collected incoming households by soliciting their voluntary commitment to his junior court, and he supervised the in-marriages of women without regard to ethnic background. The Masowe-ite pastors preached that the Reverend Masowe, formerly known as “Sixpence,” was their ultimate chief and their Savior, but crucially he remained at a distance. Like the Masowe-ites, Godfrey’s court’s people found *Exodus* to be a most helpful trope. Many of them said the world as it was known to them was swiftly coming to an end.

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WHAT IS ARGUED IN THIS BOOK

This book has made several claims, distributed throughout the chapters. The scope has progressively narrowed, albeit with several stock-taking moments spent looking around South Africa more widely; it ends in discussing a smaller population and a more restricted venue: the southern highveld, particularly Thaba Nchu, and the places to which its people’s politics took them. In this format, statements were made about popular politics in rural South Africa as a whole, over a long period. They are surprising when laid out baldly, and only if the reader has read previous chapters should he or she be prepared to entertain them.

1. At first South Africa was not a place of tribes, nor of counterintuitive tribal beliefs. *Then* it became so.

The overall picture from ca. 1400 to 1800 is one of overlapping movement and the persistence and transmutation of authority-building practices – not of separate tribes. The highveld’s political tradition in South Africa, related to ancient ideas informing people in southern, eastern, and central Africa more generally, had *amalgamation* as its central strength, not tribal particularity. A single highveld political tradition grew out of a wave of settlement and stone building after 1400, and again, and especially, after 1600; young men battled over trade routes and regional hegemonies, as a more-or-less ordinary feature of social life. The tradition was founded on the structure called the House and on the ideas of prestigious and defensible land in the healthy if drought-prone highveld. Admixture and amalgamation coexisted with splittage to produce a network of interrelated or similar (“*bechuana*”) people practicing a mixed-farming economy with regional pastoral circuits. *Ha rotse* and *rolong* were part of wider waves of stone-building and hierarchical politics. There was no special status or part of speech called an ethnic name, but rather there were situational, and precise, “self–other” distinctions.

Alliances were critical. The Motebele – Motebejane pairing, representing the twin-court pair, senior and junior, were a part of the highveld political tradition. Twin-births in oral traditions signify the application of this paradigm to real situations, as much as reality's conditioning of memory. (Hence “Ndebele” or Matebele at its root was not an ethnonym but a political position occupied by strong incoming courts.) In the highveld “Difaqane,” and perhaps in the eastern “Mfecane” as well, young men above all other sectors of society joined together in support of this or that “junior court” and pursued their agenda, often according to enforced masculine codes of honor. As in the past, the return to peacetime entailed restitching genealogies together and renewing rituals of inclusion.

Tribalization of South African people in literates' discourse and tribalization in the actual interplay of social forms in speech and behavior among the masses are not the same thing. Even as tribal depictions abounded in print, popular organization still included interethnic forces and trends central to traditional highveld politics. For a long time, the older popular forms of mobilization coexisted with the ethnic and religious vocabularies that seemed to deny them their integrity. Even after ethnic terms became common parlance, not everyone meant the same thing by them. Useful ambiguity has always defined the tribal paradigm among those who deployed it, from Jan van Riebeeck's time on. The important shift was away from self-rule, away from agrarian freedom and warring chiefdoms enmeshed in various alliances and common rankings, and toward rural proletarianization and external administration.

Apropos the making of tribes, we may cite the Supreme Court justice, Oliver Wendell Holmes, who wrote, “A word is not a crystal transparent and unchanged; it is the skin of a living thought.”⁹⁰ The meaning of words later taken as ethnic *shifted* to be that way, even as their outward form stayed the same. This is because they were used in changed circumstances. In general, history presented problems to colonial and imperial overrule that the tribalization of identity was supposed to solve. Barolong, Basuto, Bahurutshe, and other ethnonyms, themselves quite old as spoken sounds, followed “living thought” from the 1840s on to become tribes. The leaders of the early nineteenth-century highveld were not responsible for this; European colonialism was.

2. Creating and maintaining the religious sphere was an imperial preoccupation from the 1820s on. The desire for self-rule in spite of declining access to land was made, more and more, into a religious matter, subject to regulation and policing. This process cannot be disentangled from the subordination of the highveld.

⁹⁰ Oliver Wendell Holmes, Supreme Court Justice, in *Towne v. Eisner*, 245 US 418, 425 (1918), cited by Robert Watson Gordon, *The Legacy of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 181, 301, and Eugene C. Gerhart, *Quote It Completely! World Reference Guide to More than 5,500 Memorable Quotations from Law and Literature* (Buffalo, N.Y.: William S. Hein, 1998), 1145.

The people of South Africa were not monotheistic; or rather, once monotheism is no longer required by our uncritical acceptance of past translations, the evidence for monotheism evaporates. Even more, there had been no “religion” on the highveld to speak of until missionaries brought it. Robert Moffat, Samuel Broadbent, and highveld borderlands men together created Christianity out of conversations about nostalgia for the world upended by the “Difaqane.” A growing discourse of father, A/ancestor, H/heaven, power, and salvation structured all the major landed political formations on the rural highveld, defeated in some forms, persisting, through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, in others. Relatedly, the rising states of the ca. 1820s to the 1840s – Griqua, Zulu, Nxele (briefly), Lesotho, Pedi, Matabele, Mlanjeni (again, briefly), and lesser ones including Thaba Nchu – all brought elements of Christian thought and allegiance into their makeup, even as Christianity at first made little headway among ordinary people. These states stayed true to the political traditions of alliance, ancestry, men’s mobilization in crises, and defense of land and cattle. Missionaries tried to keep their charges, living in and between these states, oriented toward ritual and personal salvation, facing up or out onto an Other world.

3. The destruction of highveld people’s free access to the land necessarily preceded the development of mass Christianity. (In South African historiography, this important shift has been minimized in favor of highlighting the transition from sharecropping to labor tenantry, which followed later.)

The highveld word adopted to mean “God” once meant ancestor and played an important role in animating collective behavior. At one time found in the verbalizations associated with chiefly power, spoken in critical moments and almost exclusively by men, the word migrated into diverse utterances. At midcentury, when rumblings were heard of a subcontinental war against the Cape Colony, some refused fully to translate and transform ancestor into God, if that God was the ultimate rationale of a colonial order. Christianity itself also remained a potent field for insurgent movements to draw on. By the 1870s, the battles that people fought no longer forestalled the destruction of their independence, and Christianity began to predominate among them.

By the end of the century a common understanding of Christianity’s domain gained ground, but not everywhere, and there were still many gray-area mobilizations. On the question of how “political” turn-of-the-century popular movements among South Africans really were, the point to behold is that the state had again and again to decide *exactly that*. The state monitored and patrolled them, in and out of court, even as it began to elaborate a tribal structure useful for Native Administration in the 1920s.

4. Once we stop thinking in terms of “peoples,” who had “beliefs,” the highveld’s political tradition, in its real situation in history, comes better into focus.

It is to be hoped that textbooks about South Africa would no longer write of politics first appearing among the people at a specific moment in the recent past. The nationalist understanding of popular politics as the twentieth-

century movement to transcend tribes and chiefs unwittingly accepts an imperialist and ultimately Apartheid vision of Africans' history. Thus an excellent and distinguished recent project relates that "until the late 1950s, political organisations barely featured in the long history of rural resistance in Xhalanga" in the Transkei.⁹¹ The burden of this book is to show that a history of political organization(s), and not just resistance, may indeed be traced to South Africa's past.

Relatedly, "Coloured" history should not be treated as exclusively "Cape" history to be separated off from that of Bantu-speaking "Natives," who are then relegated to anthropologists. On the highveld inside South Africa proper, the distinction between "Coloured" and (for instance) "Barolong" and not only "Coloured" and European (or "Afrikaner") was created variously, in different places at different times, under conditions of stress and struggle, largely after 1840. Through the 1880s one finds gradations rather than universal distinctions. The ascendancy in Thaba Nchu and elsewhere of a racial view of the tribe became official policy but was not echoed in every discourse. Even in the 1920s, seemingly ubiquitous distinctions were liable to disappear in a pinch. One must take one's cue from the pragmatism and *metisage* among ordinary people on the highveld, who refused to emphasize ethnicity or race. The historian has a right – I would say, an obligation – to speak about the people from the middle of South Africa without defining them by race, "Griqua" included; to speak about them in terms of what they were doing, rather than how Europeans came to know them.

By the same token, the history of South Africa over the centuries should not be abstracted from the history of Lesotho, Botswana, even Zimbabwe (nor Swaziland and Mozambique, which are hardly mentioned in this book). South Africa was and is of southern Africa, if its social and political trends are to be grasped. Lesotho especially is too often rather conveniently dropped from South Africa's history. It was a mass political movement in the heartland of the country before it became a bordered labor reserve and "nation-state."

5. The historical trajectory of South Africa and its people in "precolonial" and "colonial" times was one of growth and change, not stasis and defense. South Africans' history might not be so neatly separated between the precolonial and colonial, the customary, ancient ways, and the reactive, awakening citizenry. The division of the past into pre- and post-phases has been only too convenient to Western imperialism's modes of accumulation. The concept of the coming of "modernity" similarly is presentist and unhelpful.

University-based ethnographers' (re)construction of "customary" behavior emerged from their real observations in the 1930s through 1950s, following

⁹¹ South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, Vol. 1 (1960–1970) (Cape Town: Struik and Zebra Press, 2004), 203; Ranajit Guha, "The Prose of the Counter-Insurgency," in Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Spivak, eds., *Selected Subaltern Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), discusses this as the "tertiary" form of colonial discourse, 71.

the professionalization of anthropology. However, their conclusions were erroneously applied to the life of historical South Africans from the Iron Age onward. The emerging tribal model ultimately influenced the worldwide image of colonized people, of people struggling with “change,” to conserve their “traditional ways,” as if the trouble under colonial rule were due to their own intransigence, their inability to adapt. The question of land and autonomy was removed and an image created of the tribesman facing the world from his oasis of custom and ritual.

In what became South Africa – and finally, one must suspect, all over the world – colonialism encountered not some inertial substance but ongoing efforts to organize and create, using any means proven effective, running up from a past outsiders knew little about. The efforts continued while Europeans dispossessed those in their way and combated, translated, and redirected Africans’ claims.

6. What explains the apparent religiosity of rural mobilizations in the 1920s through 1940s – one extending even to the largely urban-oriented ANC and the Communist Party? Two elements: the drive to secure the fullest range of meaning in locutions long used in situations of crisis or unusual opportunity, and the criminalization of nonreligious crowd-motivating speech.⁹²

Twentieth-century highveld millenarianism was the reoccupation of Christian thought by the desire for actual restorations. Having been promulgated by the earliest highveld missionaries, millenarianism yoked current events to a master narrative that was written and preordained. The expectation of victory was announced as if it were a sermon for the hearer only, something to be internalized in one’s person. Failure was not conceivable, because the context for South African millenarian thought was the relegation of blacks to tenantry, repeated migrancy, or criminality. The state’s enforcement produced sacred space for the raised voices of Christian congregants, but people raised their voices everywhere they could when their land and livelihood were under attack. Millennial thinking is shouted and proclaimed, not mullied. And even the most extreme millenarian sentiments echo the original highveld presentation of Christianity, turning it back into something tangible, as it must have appeared at the first moment of translation: “A better world is coming.” However improbably, this elemental idea was never quashed.

⁹² The literature on the general form and conditions of millenarian protest is vast, and unsettled, extending from Ernst Troeltsch and Max Weber, to Norman Cohn and Eric Hobsbawm, and onward. Thanks to Phil Soergal. For a pertinent debate on how or whether to conceive “the spirit realm” as a domain of action in Africa, one might begin with Luise White, “On Unpacking the Occult: Why We Need to Go Back to Friuli (or Transylvania, for That Matter),” unpublished paper, delivered April 6, 2001, accessible at www.history.wisc.edu/bernault/magical/Luise%20White%20occult.htm; and Terence Ranger, “Scotland Yard in the Bush: Medicine Murders, Child Witches and the Construction of the Occult: A Literature Review,” *Africa* 77, 2 (2007), 272–83.

Primary and Archival Sources

WMMS: *Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Archives.*

At Yale, e.g., RG 69: South African Correspondence (fiches); at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London; at Cory Library and by interlibrary loan as fiches. The incoming South Africa correspondence is given as “S.A. corr.” At SOAS, there are letters collected by missionary John Daniel (e.g., 1881–82) and others; and journals, e.g., *Journal of the Reverend Shrewsbury*. The School of Oriental and African Studies in London has original materials, such as the personal papers and letters of Samuel Broadbent (including “Reminiscences” in several parts).

Thaba Nchu circuit reports 1879–83, i.e., MS 15620, the WMMS circuit reports for Kimberley, Bloemfontein, and Thaba Nchu, were separately made available to me from the Cory Library, noted below.

LMS: *London Missionary Society Archives, Council for World Mission, School of Oriental and African Studies, Senate House Library, University of London.*

Letters of John Campbell, John Philip, and other missionaries, of which incoming letters from the field are marked “S.A. corr.”

Other LMS material cited in notes.

SOAS: *School of Oriental and African Studies Manuscript Library, Senate House Library, University of London.*

Robert Moffat’s Kuruman press editions, including *Likaelo* (1841), *Mahuku a Morimo* (1842), *Mahuku a Morimo mo puon ya Secuana* (1847), and later LMS publications such as *Dihela tsa Tihelo* (1894).

Cory: *Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University, Grahamstown.*

Esp. MS 15618, 15619, 15620, etc., Circuit Reports for the Methodist Church.

Minutes of the Bechuana District Committees. These included Baptisms, 1894–1936, Thaba Nchu (MS 17020) and Marriages (etc.) (MS 17021) and other material, such as the Minutes for Thaba Nchu, 1837–50, and a list of members (1859): MS 15001.

The Letters of Reverend Owen: MS 1112–3, 1115–6, 1118.

The Journal of Reverend Cameron, 1836–41: PR 3548.

USPG: *Bodleian Library, Oxford, the United Kingdom.*

Archive of the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG):

Series D, original letters received.

Series E, missionary reports.

Yale: *Yale University Libraries.*

Included are the Divinity School library, and the Beineke, where several original publications were consulted.

The C. T. Loram Papers.

Nineteenth century journals, separately listed below.

BNA: *Botswana National Archives, Gaborone, Botswana.*

Protectorate Administration papers duplicate all relevant imperial correspondence.

The papers used in this book include these:

District Commissioner Francistown (DCF) series.

Secretariat (S) series.

High Commissioner (HC) series.

Resident Commissioner (Mafeking) (RC) series.

The Isaac Schapera Papers, especially but not exclusively, the 1940s court histories and land reports.

University of Botswana, *Gaborone, Botswana, Library.*

Kiyaga-Mulindwa, David, ed., *Tswapong Historical Texts*, Vol. 1: *Origins of the Batswapong*; Vol. 2: *Politics and Society in Letswapo*; and Vol. 3: *Crafts of the Batswapong*, ca. 1982.

Students' publications.

SAM-L: *The South African Museum, Cape Town, Library.*

The unpublished notebooks of Sir Andrew Smith, Vol. 12: "Memoranda A: Notes on Tswana, Sotho and Matabele Tribes." This extended set of definitions, phrases, and inquiries dates mostly from 1841. The collection is otherwise worthy.

KAB: *Cape Town Archives Depot, Cape Town.*

For both Theal's unpublished *Basutoland Records* notes and manuscripts, and a small amount of Cape Colony official correspondence.

VAB: *Orange Free State Archives Depot, Bloemfontein.*

Many series were useful and are cited here, especially the following:

CO (Col. Sec'y's office), i.e., 1902-10; e.g., CO 616 2206.

NAB (Native Affairs Board), e.g., 2 N99/06.

Native Affairs Branch ORC (NAB), e.g., 1905-08.

SRC (Superintendent Refugee Camps), e.g., 4, RC 1114.

Volksraad Series: e.g., VR (Annexures to minutes of Volksraad).

GS 1570 (Old Series 1403: Naturelle Opperhoofde: Moroka [Native Affairs: Moroka], and Old Series 1404: Arbitrasie Opperhoofdschap der Baralongs te Thaba Nchu [Arbitration of Barolong Affairs at Thaba Nchu], Ou Ser. 1403 (Bk. 1), Ou Ser. 1404 (Bk. 2), and labeled Arbitrage Opperhoofdschap de Baralongs te Thaba Nchu, 1880.

In addition there were other GS series such as GS 1571-3 (Ou Ser. 1404-7), GS 1574, 1575, 1576 (Ou Ser. 1407-1411); GS 1568: Native Affairs, Moroka, etc.

Criminal Records (LTN: Kriminele Rekords): 1/1/1/1 to 1/1/1/14.

SAB: *Central Archives Depot, Union Building, Pretoria: The South African National Archives.*

GG: The Governor General series: for instance, GG 1166, 50/543, 50/552, 50/558, etc.

NTS: The Native Affairs Department (NAD)'s Secretarial series.
The Harold Strange Collection.

SAL: *The South African Library, Cape Town, South Africa.*

MSC 39/13 Bks. 7 to 12, Thomas Hodgson's manuscript journals.

W. G. Mears, unpublished papers, including ms. for Mears, W. G., *The Wesleyan Baralong Mission in Trans-Orangia, 1821-1884*. Cape Town: Struik, 1970.

UNISA: *Pretoria, University of South Africa.*

E. M. S. le Fleur Collection, including personal papers and unpublished writing of A. A. S. le Fleur.

NEC Oral Evidence, 1930-32, i.e., vol. 8.

CGM: *Cathedral of St. George and St. Michael, Bloemfontein.*

Anglican Registers for Thaba Nchu and surrounding areas, including marriages and baptisms.

St. Paul's: *St. Paul's Manse, Thaba Nchu: Wesleyan Church Records.*

Conversations with the Reverend M. Phokontsi.

Baptismal Papers (Loose), 1838-1855 (including Bap 1838).

Baptismal Register, 1857-1878 (Bap 1857).

Baptismal Register (fragmented), 1878-1896 (Bap 1878). (This register also contains entries from Bap. 1838 - i.e., the registers were reused.)

MLM: Minutes of the Leaders' Meetings, including MLM 1914; MLM 1915 (-1925); MLM 1925 (-1931).
 Schools Committee 1915-1941 (SC 1915).
 General Meeting Book 1919-1946 (GMB 1919).
 Membership Contribution Book 1915-1919 (MCB 1915).

WITS: *University of Witwatersrand, Cullen Library.*

SAIRR: South African Institute of Race Relations files.
 Modiri Molema papers, including draft of Molema, *History of the Barolong* (ms.).
 Solomon K. Plaatje papers.
 SPCK Papers: Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, papers, including correspondence.
 CPSA Papers: Church of the Province of South Africa, including William Crisp's papers, and his personal notebooks and letter books, a Register of Clergy, and printed material.
 Diary of J. T. Carmichael (1873-77), and miscellaneous material.
 Journals listed separately, below.

ZNA: *Zimbabwean National Archives, Harare, Zimbabwe.*

Material on Tegwane, the Plumtree mission, and Tati District (ZIM 25 Plumtree including Tegwane mission, 1926-27, etc.)
 ZIM 34 Tati - Incorporation with Southern Rhodesia; NO 1 Northern Light Gold Mine Co. (1880-88): /1, /2/1, /3/1-5 (i.e., NO 1/1, NO 1/2/1, etc.); PR1 Premier Tati Monarch Reef Co. Ltd. (1895-1910): /1/1/1; /1/2/1; TA 1 Tati Concession Mining and Exploration Co. (1888-95): /2/1-1; /3/1; /4/1-2; TA 2 Tati Concessions Ltd. (1895-1914): /2/1-3 (including agreement).
 TA 3 Tati Blue Jacket Syndicate Ltd. (1893-1914?): /1; /2/1, and other material.

Tegwane School, Plumtree, Zimbabwe.

Conversations with the Reverend W. S. P. Khiyaza and Mr. L. A. Tapela, Chaplain's Office, Tegwane High School.

FMA, *Francistown Museum Archives, Botswana* (Catien Van Waaden, Box 910, Francistown).

Papers on the Tati Concessions Company.

ZMMH: *Zimbabwe Methodist Mission House* (No. 7, Central Ave., near Catholic Church; Reverend Margaret James, PO Box 71 Causeway, Harare).

Parish records (minutes, registers) including those for Ramaquabana (Moroka) and Matsiloje.

OHP: *University of Witwatersrand, African Studies Institute, Oral History Project*

For instance, folder 12, an interview with Mrs. R. M. Mogai by M. S. S. Ntoane at 884 Ikageng Location, Potchefstroom, 06.11.79, tape 72 1/b (Tswana); interview with Mr. Voetganger Ramakatu Chebase Manapa, by Mahlomola Ntoane at Evaton, n.d., tape no. 262-3, pp. 63-4.

SMP: *Samuel Marks Papers, Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Center, University of Cape Town.*

The papers of the businessman Samuel Marks.

K III M: *Serowe, Botswana: The Khama III Memorial Museum Archives.*

The Khama III Papers; the Tshekedi Khama Papers.

BPP: *British Parliamentary Papers.*

Including BPP, 1836 (538), Vol. VII, and 1837 (425), Vol. VII: Reports, *Select Committee on Aborigines (British settlements)*, Vol. 1, and others cited in notes.

In addition I consulted

Journals: *various periodicals, including*

Abantu-Batho (SAB).

The Barolong: Quarterly Papers of the Bloemfontein Mission (WITS).

Bloemfontein Diocesan Magazine (University of Witwatersrand, Cullen Library, i.e. WITS).

Church Missionary Record (WITS).

The Friend of the Free State, Bloemfontein (VAB).

Griqua and Coloured People's Opinion (SAL).

Journal des Missions Évangéliques de Paris (WITS, and University of Maryland, Interlibrary Loan).

Koranta ya Becoana (Yale).

Mission Field (WITS).

Net Cast in Many Waters (WITS).

Quarterly Chronicle of Transactions [of the London Missionary Society] (SOAS: see LMS above).

Quarterly Papers of the Orange Free State Mission (WITS).

Umteteli wa Bantu (BNA).

Voice of Missions (Yale).

Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine (Bodleian Library, Oxford).

Newspapers indexed in the British Newspaper Database (London).

Interviews with persons in Thaba Nchu and surrounding areas (1998) and Northeast District (Tati), Botswana (1997, 2001), cited in notes.

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Index

Note: Page numbers in italics indicate figures. Unmarked single capitalized terms are places.

- Abantu-Batho*, 200
Aborigines' Protection Society, 163
Abrams, Joe, 207
African Independent Churches (AICs),
 184–85, 190, 217, 242–43, 245, 250
 See also specific churches
African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME),
 171–74, 179, 181, 185, 190, 198
African National Congress (ANC), 190, 200,
 206, 244, 250
Afrikaner, Jonker, 77
Afrikaners, 179, 206, 223–27, 239, 249
 See also Boers; Coloureds
age-grades, 42
 See also circumcision; gender; youngmen
alcohol, 176, 200
Aliwal North, 21, 138, 142
alliance, 7, 12, 21, 27–28, 31, 33–34, 39n95,
 40–42, 49, 59, 62–65, 70–72, 77, 82, 84,
 86, 91, 103, 106, 108–9, 214, 242–44,
 246–48
 immigration and, 25
 Seleka and, 156
 Youngmen and, 196
 with Boers, 122, 133
 Zimbabwe and, 173
 See also partnership; twin court
amalgamation (in politics), 12, 37, 59, 71, 84,
 108, 214, 242–44, 246–48
 and Christianity, 181
 and Tati District, 187–89
AmaNdebele, *See* Tebele
America, United States of, 78, 121, 171–73
 influence on highveld, 181–83
 rumors about, 7, 206, 213
ancestor, 2, 8, 11, 14–16, 22, 25, 28, 31, 32,
 36, 39–41, 59–61, 62–64, 68–69, 70–71,
 85–87, 91–93, 115, 120, 122, 182–84,
 195–96, 198, 240, 242–44, 248
A. A. S. le Fleur and, 201
ancestry and, 16
 defined, 17–21
 as God, 99–100, 102, 117, 133, 153
 grammar and, 106
 historical subjectivity of, 230, 232–25
 koro and *khulu* and, 89
 as *modimo*, 15–16, 18–19, 32, 62
 slippage of concept of, 103–5
 spiritization of, 235–26
 surnames and, 129
 Xhosa, 171
Anderson, Rev. William, 13–17,
 59, 88
Anglicanism, 120, 159, 161–63, 171, 174,
 190–92, 196, 198, 216, 218, 229
 Church Missionary Society and, 120
 in Thaba Nchu, 142–44, 149–54
Anglo-Boer War, *see* South African War
anthropology and anthropologists, 59,
 62, 69
 Adam Kuper, 141
 German, 146
 Isaac Schapera and, 80, 97
 See also Isaac Schapera
Apartheid, 46, 240–41, 245, 248
Apies River, 73
apocalypse, the, 99, 206–7
 See also millenarianism
apostolic churches, 242–43, 245
 See also Pentecostals

- Apostolic Faith Mission, 181, 242
 Apostolic Sabbath Church of God, 242, 245–46
- Arbousset, Rev. Thomas, 2, 18n45, 20, 87, 117
See also Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS)
- archaeology and archaeologists, 8, 36, 42–45, 51–52, 65, 72
- Archbell, Rev. James, 2, 30n72, 33, 105, 117, 119, 136, 157
 Coloureds and, 122–23
- Arden-Clarke, Col. Charles, 169
- Augustine, 80–81
- Bahurutshe, *see* *rotse*
- Bambatha Rebellion, 182
See also Maphumulo; Zulu
- Bantu
 Coloured and, 243
 defined, 47
 “House,” 49–50, 239
 languages, 1, 8, 12, 14, 49, 53, 73, 79, 87, 120–24, 128–29, 226–28, 235
 population, 137
 as “race,” 9, 227, 235
 “religion,” 236
 S-Group in, 48, 55
 surnames, 129
- Barends, Barend (chief), 5, 7, 12, 14, 78, 117, 119–20, 129, 135
- Barkly, Sir Henry, 153n136, 200
- Barolong, *see* *rolong*
- Barolong Progressive Association (BPA), 218, 220–21, 227–32, 238–40
- Barotse, *see* *rotse*
- Barth, Frederick, 127
- “Bastards” (or Bastaards), 4, 12, 23n60, 34, 145, 219
 Methodists and, 122
 Moffat and, 77–78
 Samuel and, 158–59
See also *métis*
- Basotho, *see* Basuto
- Basuto, 147, 149, 155, 160–61, 164–69, 178, 186–88, 200, 207, 219, 231, 236, 245, 247
 Basotho, Sesotho, and, 84, 132, 144–45, 236
 ethnic formation of, 124–29, 131
 -land, 60, 144, 188, 199, 205
See also Bechuana; Lesotho; Moshoeshoe; Tswana
- Bataung, 63–64, 67–69, 134
See also lion
- batlhanka*, 72
See also labor; slavery
- Bathlaping, *see* fish, people of the place of
- Batswana, *see* Bechuana
- Beach, David, 42–46, 53–54, 56
- Bechuana, 7, 9, 18, 22, 32, 41, 72, 109, 114, 116, 164, 193, 219, 221, 222–23, 225–26, 232–37, 240–42, 245
The Bechuana (William Crisp), 153
 defined, 9–10
 -land, 80, 174, 186, 194
 -land Protectorate, 80, 165, 179–80, 188, 191–92, 219, 245
 London Missionary Society District Committee, 123
 mission ledger classification of, 130–31, 138
 “tribes,” 121, 145
See also Basuto; Botswana; Tswana; *métis*; *rolong*; *rotse*
- Beckett, Canon H.F., 151–52
- beer, 134, 171, 243
See also food; grain
- Beinart, William, 207
- Bergenaars (mountain rebels), 19, 34, 78, 119
See also *métis*
- Betheldorp, 12
- Bible, 14–15, 22, 27, 32, 76, 89, 117, 185, 189, 203, 217, 221, 240
 A. A. S. le Fleur and, 205
 history, 44, 152–53
 metaphors in, 27, 103–4
 Rastafarians and, 207
 translations of, 90, 100, 124
 Spiritual Healing Church and, 242
See also literacy
- Bitjuana, 7, 9–10
See also Bechuana
- bina* (“dance”), 40, 51, 61, 72, 118
 honoring, 89–90
 praising, 86, 185, 205, 213, 228
 rain and, 80, 82
 song, 197, 210, 213
See also totem
- Binnelanders, 118, 122
See also *métis*
- Bisseux, Rev. Isaac, 18n5
- Blacksmithy, 97–98
See also iron
- Blauwberg, 82
- Bleek, Wilhelm, 147
- Bloemfontein, 66, 111, 128, 135, 144–45, 150–53, 163–64, 169, 170, 179, 181, 190, 193–98, 200, 211, 219, 229–30, 240, 242

- Bloemhof, 25
 Boer(s), 2, 5, 6, 23–24, 76, 96–97, 109, 112, 118–20, 138–39, 163, 165, 206
 alliances of, 122, 133
 Christianity and, 123
 farms of, 130, 149
 Great Trek and, 122
 inheritance and, 154, 158
 of Orange Free State, 135–37, 138–40
 war and violence and, 132–34, 151, 166
 See also Afrikaners; Dutch
 Boer War, *see* South African War
 Boeyens, Jan, 65
 Bogachu (and Bogacu) (chief), 96–99, 103, 151–53, 155, 174, 187
 interrogation of, 160
 Jacob, 140
 Timothy, 189, 215
 William, 196–97, 199, 209, 211, 215
 violence and, 164–70
 See also alliance; twin courts
bogologolo (greatness, long ago, the domain of the ancestors), 14–16, 19–20, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 37, 84, 87, 89, 107, 118, 122, 131, 153, 181, 210, 226, 232–26
 as a political idea, 45–47, 131
 Booshuana, *see* Bechuana
 Booth, Rev. Joseph, 181
 Booysen, J.P., 232
bongaka, 120
 See also healers
 Borcherds, Petrus, 8, 11, 64
 borderlands, 2–6 (defined), 7, 8, 9, 11–12, 17, 36, 65, 97, 103, 134, 138, 200, 248
 Bosutswe, 48, 51, 58
 Botha, Louis, 181, 193
 Botlolo (chief), 62
 Botswana, 40, 47, 49, 56, 69, 80, 132, 138, 226, 246, 249
 See also Bechuana (-land Protectorate)
 Brand, Johannes H., 138–39, 141, 151, 154–55, 162–63, 166, 168–70, 220, 223, 231–32
 arbitration of Thaba Nchu chiefship, 156–61
 See also Orange Free State
 Breutz, P.–L., 59, 68, 236
 oral traditions collected by, 59–66
briqua (alt. *brickje*), 4–7
 British, xiii, xiv, 145
 arrival of, 2
 closeness to missionaries of, 97
 conquest by, 200
 culture, 2, 150, 180, 188
 English language and, 80, 122–23
 Liberalism, 149, 225
 newspaper, 143, 145
 settlers, 86, 130, 134–39, 149, 188
 rule, 12, 109, 127–28, 130, 149, 168, 171–72, 176–80, 187–89, 200, 214–16, 226, 236
 Victorians, 44
 British South Africa Company (BSAC), 173, 178
 Broadbent
 Luiza, 22–33
 Rev. Samuel, 2, 6, 8, 10, 15, 22, 26–34 (travels and work), 37–39, 79, 87–94 (language work), 104–5, 149, 248
 Bulawayo, 222
 Bundy, Colin, 207
 Burchell, John W., 10–12, 54
 Burgers, T.F., 141
 burials, 32, 44, 51, 115, 168, 184–85, 229, 230
 See also court; death
 Bushmen, 1, 6–8, 12, 14, 201
 “Khoisan” label, 120, 135, 145–47
 Samuel and, 154, 158
 uncertainty of definition of, 9, 12, 72
 variable status of, 22–24, 30, 34, 91, 109
 Buthelezi, Wellington, 206

 Calabrese, John, 52
 Calderwood, Rev. Henry, 122–23
 Caledon River and Valley (Willow [Mohokare] or “Middle” River), xii, 19, 97, 110, 111, 118, 120–23, 128, 130, 134, 138, 142, 155, 157, 169, 170, 174, 199, 215, 230, 239, 243
 Callaway, Henry, 144
 Cameron, Rev. James, 2, 112, 128–29, 134, 136, 143, 166
 Campbell, Rev. John, 2, 9, 10, 13–16, 20, 23, 27, 32, 38, 54, 65, 66, 76–77, 88, 92
 Campbell Town, 31, 111
 cannabis (marijuana), 7
 cannibalism, 25, 31
 Cape
 Colony, 2–4, 7, 11, 12, 33–34, 65, 73–74, 78, 105, 109, 113, 131, 240, 245, 248
 Eastern, *see* Eastern Cape
 of Good Hope, 2–4, 109, 129, 146, 149, 152, 222–23, 249
 parliament, 138
 Town (Cape Town), 2–7, 13, 17, 22, 192, 194, 201, 224
 Casalis, Rev. Eugene, 2, 18n45, 93n54, 127, 131

- cattle, xii, 1, 5-9, 17-20, 25, 27-28, 31-33, 38-40, 43-47, 52, 58, 70-72, 82, 86, 165, 167, 169, 174, 177-78, 183, 189, 192-97
as "ancestor," 84
Central Cattle Plan or -Pattern (CP), 45-48, 50, 54
inheritance, 158
-killing, 86, 132
marriage and, 160
métis and, 114
preaching and, 91
raiding, 138, 140, 151
tribute, 112
- ceramics, 44
Nkope (Urewe), 46-47
Zhizo (or Leopard's Kopje), 52
- Chaka, *see* Shaka
- Chake (brother of Moroka), 134, 158-59
Adam, 159
- Champion, A.W.G., 210
- Changamire (kingdom), 53
- chiefdom(s), 12, 15, 78-79, 87
apartheid and, 245
of Basuto, 139-40
Christianity and, 92, 96, 101-6
inheritance of, 158-60
of Kafue River, 58
of Kalanga, 245
lion and, 67
of Moroka, 128, 134
of Pedi, 139
rolong, 67-70, 73
rotse, 56-59, 63-64
Segregation and, 238-39
Seleka, 153-61
of Tawana, 110
tebele-tebeyane courts and, 60-64
- chiefship, xiv, 1, 6, 11, 15, 21, 44, 153-61, 178, 189, 198, 201, 207-8, 217-23, 232-33, 238-39, 247
- children, 34, 36, 40, 41, 77-78, 91, 102, 109, 114, 121, 139, 145, 157, 159, 167, 194, 219-20, 242
essays written by, 232-36
Griqua, 114
kidnapping into servitude of, 112, 130, 134
legitimacy of, 160-61
school, 109, 121
- Chimurenga (Zimbabwean 1896-7 war), 173
- Chose, Rev. Jeremiah, 198
- Christ, *see* Jesus Christ
- Christianity, xii, xiii, 73, 106, 116, 117, 121, 127-28, 133, Chapter Three *passim*, 221-22, 224, 230, 241-44, 248, 250
ancestor "veneration" and, 235-36
chiefship and, 106, 133
ethnicity and, 119-22, 137, 141, 144, 149-56
as form of power, 114-16, 121
métis and, 114-16, 122-24
origins in South Africa of, 93
surnames, 129
translation and, 117
writing and, 214, 216
- Chuin (*chwaing*, *tswaing*, *letshwaing*, *letshwaeng*), 95-106, 113, 114
- Church Missionary Society, 120
- circumcision, 10, 14-15, 21, 28-29, 31, 40, 42, 47, 51, 66, 140-41, 156, 196-97
age-regiments and, 68
in grasslands, 84
Moroka and, 112, 140
Moshoeshoe and, 133, 247
rotse and, 54
- Clulee, Rev. Charles, 145
- coal, 188
- Coetzee, Judge J., 239
- Colenso, Bishop John William, 152, 171
- coloured(s), also Coloured(s), xii, 129, 180, 190, 203, 208-11, 243, 249
Griqua Church and, 203-5
making of, 122-24, 144-47
rebellion and, 135
Samuelites and, 168-70
See also Griqua; *métis*
- Comaroff, Jean and John L., 59, 62, 69, 74
- commando system, 5-6, 73, 108, 130, 137
- Communist Party of South Africa, 206
- Congo, 50
- Congregationalism, 33, 115
See also London Missionary Society
- Corana, *see* Korana
- Cornea (alt. Cornet) (pastor), 203, 205
- counterfactual hypothesis, 135-36
- court (*kgotla*), 6, 7, 14, 16-18, 25-31, 37, 40-41, 44, 46, 51-52, 59, 62, 66, 67, 70-72, 84-85, 93, 96, 104, 110-12, 115, 222, 225-26, 239, 243
Bogachu's, 163, 190, 211
Christianity and, 116, 153
of junior status, 140-41
metaphorical, 131, 150
pico (*pitso*) or large meeting and, 230-38
rolong, 58-59
Seleka, 135, 149-55
Tshidi, 108
women and, 81-82
Youngmen's, 196
See also chiefship; twin court

- court (of a magistrate), 166, 170, 182, 208–9, 211, 227–30, 239
- crime and criminality, 4, 23, 31–32, 39, 92, 170, 190, 208–11, 250
- Crisp, Rev. William, 143, 151–53, 163, 165–67
- crocodile (*kwena*), 1, 31–32, 37, 39, 51–52, 55, 57, 61, 64, 66, 70–73, 83–84, 97, 108, 112, 114, 119, 154, 158, 170, 174, 178, 186, 234, 237
- Kwena and Mokwena, 63, 66, 237
- oral tradition of, 58, 61–63
- See also* totem
- Curtis, Lionel, 180
- dance, *see* *bina*
- Daniel, Rev. John, 142–43, 145, 162, 207
- Daniel, Rowland Mortimer, 209
- Dart, Raymond, 224
- Daumas, François, 20, 117
- David, Peter (*métis* settler), 118n27, 119
- death, 91, 107, 133, 141n100, 143, 156, 164, 166–68, 170, 173, 184, 194, 197, 199, 216, 218, 220, 222, 233, 235, 241
- funerals and, 163, 184
- missionaries' eschatology of, 89, 98–102, 110, 115, 117
- democracy, 11, 114, 155, 231–32, 238–39
- Denbow, James, 48, 51–52
- De Rust, 203
- devil, *see* Satan
- diamond fields (mining), 127, 138, 141, 199
- “Difaqane,” 11–12, 20, 22, 24–33, 34–35, 73–74, 110, 125, 247
- explanation for, 34–41
- translation and, 87–103
- See also* “Mfecane”
- Dingane (also Dingaana), 85, 120, 173, 184
- disease and illness, 22–23, 165, 170, 194–95, 221
- Dithakong, 8–12, 14–17, 23, 32–34, 36, 41, 48, 64–65, 77–79, 96, 113
- Battle of, 36, 41
- Ditsirigae (also John), 29
- Diutlwileng, 96
- division and decentralization (in politics), 34, 43, 57, 71, 234, 246
- Dower, Edward, 186, 192–94
- Dowie, Rev. Alexander, 181
- Drakensberg (mountain range), 1, 49, 72, 84–85, 107, 110, 171, 182
- Drennan, Matthew, 224
- drosters*, 4
- Durkheim, Emile, 94
- Dutch, 2–6, 11–12, 23, 76, 97, 118, 120, 122–23, 145, 157
- and *métis*, 114
- surnames, 114, 129
- Dutch East India Company, 4–6
- Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), 203
- eagles, 44, 57
- East Africa, 188, 209
- Great Lakes and, 46–47
- language of, 89
- migration and, 52
- Eastern Cape, 118, 129–36, 215, 222
- See also* Grahamstown; grasslands; Mlanjeni
- Eco, Umberto, 79
- education, 108–9, 143, 145, 163, 171, 176, 182
- See also* circumcision
- Edward VII, King, 189
- Edwards, Rev. Edward, 23–24, 33
- Edwards, Rev. John, 2, 11, 28, 30–33
- Eldredge, Elizabeth, 36, 38
- elephant, 3, 34, 71
- See also* totem
- Ellenberger, Rev. D.F., 2, 20
- oral tradition collected by, 59–62, 63, 67–68
- Engelbrecht (*métis* family), 23, 24, 78
- environment, 53, 67, 94, 96
- degradation of Thaba Nchu's, 216
- fertility and, 110
- Tati District's, 240–41
- water and, 31, 40, 67
- Etherington, Norman, 37
- ethnicity, xi, 1, 2, 5, 8, 14, 27, 38, 41, 47, 50, 81–83, 85–86, 109, 119–30, 137, 141–51, 156, 161, 163, 173, 181, 186–87, 215, 218, 234–37, 244–47
- paradigm of, 214, 224, 237
- trans-ethnicity and critique of, 52, 54, 57
- See also* chiefdom; race; tribe
- European(s), xi, xvi, 2, 4–5, 9–11, 13, 23, 27, 57, 72, 74, 78, 96, 122–24, 141, 151, 159, 161, 163, 165, 178–79, 184, 188, 192, 198, 201, 207–8, 211, 220, 224, 226, 229
- categorizing tribes, 121, 124, 128
- Christianity and, 151
- Coloureds and, 145
- as settlers, 114, 118, 130, 204
- translation and, 80, 96
- See also* Boers; British
- Evans-Pritchard, E.E., 224

- Faku (chief), 135
 famine, *see* food
 farmers and farmlands, 12–14, 20, 119,
 124, 132, 137, 178, 196, 206, 218,
 222–23
 defined, 3–4, 6–9, 36–39
 gender and, 36–39
 plows and, 110–11
 politics and, 49–50, 60, 72–73
 vocabulary of, 91, 94
 father (political idea of), 14–16, 18–19, 21,
 24–28, 33, 38, 41, 58–59, 64, 68–69,
 70–73, 89, 104, 110, 115, 117, 183, 188,
 197, 200–1, 210, 213
 ancestor and, 16–21
 biology and, 158–60
 Christianity and, 92–95, 99, 101, 242
 God as, 90
 land and, 102, 229–30
 rulership and, 105
 Fauresmith, 142, 145
 Fenyang, Walter, 190, 197, 230, 244
 “Fingoes” (*mfengu, ukumfenguza*), 83, 86,
 135, 145, 161, 166
 first-fruits ceremony, 91, 107, 132,
 152, 184
 Christian metaphor and, 91–92
 Firth, Raymond, 224–25
 Fischer, Judge P., 239
 fish, people of the place of (*batlhaping*), 7,
 11–15, 18, 21, 34, 57 (explained), 64, 69,
 78–79, 210, 233, 245
 Fish River, 3, 131
fokeng (or *Fokeng*) (totem, chiefdom), 61–63,
 68, 83, 101, 158
 food, 4, 34, 36, 179
 hunger and famine, 9, 21, 36, 39, 41, 73,
 92, 165, 170, 196, 241
 rations, 232
 sharing, 30
See also grain; stock-keeping
 Fortes, Myer, 224
 Fourie, Mattys, 119
See also Bergenaars; *métis*
 franchise, 180, 220
 Francistown, 167, 175, 176, 190, 194, 198,
 209, 227–29, 243
See also Tati District
 Frazer, Sir J.G., 79
 Fredericks, H.J., 203, 205
Friend of the Free State, 143
 Fritsch, Gustavus, 117, 146–48, 225
 frontier, 3, 4, 12
See also borderlands; Cape
 Gabashane
 Rev. Abel, 172
 Rev. Marcus, 174
 Gariep River, *see* Orange River
 Garveyism, xiii, 178, 181, 206, 207
 (Rastafarianism)
 Gawler, John, 171
 Gaza (chiefdom), 37
 gender, 6, 29, 246–47
 feminine, 3, 8, 12, 36, 38, 42, 91, 96
 masculine, 28, 34, 40–41, 46, 82
 production and, 140
 relational, 50, 100
See also warfare
 George, King, 204
 Gladstone, William E., 163
 goats, 4
 God, 15–16, 18–19, 32, 76, 81, 87–95, 99,
 101–6, 152, 182–84, 189, 199–200,
 201–2, 208, 210, 220, 229–30, 240, 242,
 247–48
 chiefs and, 85
 Moshoeshoe and, 133
 Mlanjeni and, 134, 143
 teaching the idea of, 115–17
See also ancestor
 Goeyman (*métis* family), 5
 gold mining, 176, 196, 198–99, 221, 242
 Gonntse (chief), 70, 96, 100, 114, 127
 Gordon, Col. Robert Jacob, 6–7, 58, 82
 Goronyane
 David, 158–59
 J.D., 190, 197, 244
 Gosselin, Rev. Constant, 18n45
 Grahamstown, 86, 122–23 (Schism), 144,
 148
 grain, xii, 33, 39, 164, 178, 186, 195–96
 Great Zimbabwe and, 44
 millet, 36
 sorghum, 96
See also food; maize
 Gramsci, Antonio, 212
 grasslands (eastern South Africa), 1, 35,
 46, 49, 83, 84–87, 169, 170–71,
 205–6, 222
 Matebele and, 60–64
Mfecane in, 72–73
 Mlanjeni and, 131–32, 135
 Nxele and, 77
 greatness, *see bogologolo*
 Grey, Sir George, 149, 188
 Griqua (people), xiii, 13–18, 23–27, 32–33,
 35–36, 77–80, 122–23, 126–27, 162,
 187, 200–5, 248

- Christianity and, 114–18
 expansion, 120–21
 -land, 120
 -land East, 135, 201
 -town, 23–24, 30, 33, 35, 77–80, 90, 113
 Griqua Church, 202–4
See also A. A. S. le Fleur
 Griqua National Independent Church of
 South Africa, *see* Griqua Church
 Guha, Ranajit, 212
 guns, 3, 12, 34, 41, 78, 166, 230, 242
 Guthrie, Malcolm, 49
 Gyzikoa (chiefdom), 7–8
See also twin court
- Hammond-Tooke, W.D., 224
 Hannie, Phillip, 203
ha rotse, *see* *rotse*
 Harrismith District, 183, 186
 Harts River, 109, 112, 113, 120, 121, 141
 Haskins & Sons, 221
 healers, 1, 185
 heaven, 84–86, 88–90, 94, 115–17, 119, 199,
 208, 248
See also up; *zulu*
 hell, 106–7, 115, 199
 Hendricks, Jan, 12–13, 16, 77–78, 135
 highveld (defined), xii, 2–4
 hippopotamus, 51, 57
 historians, 3, 11, 34–37, 42, 45, 90, 93, 102,
 132, 179, 181, 212, 248–49
 Beinart, William, 207
 Bundy, Colin, 137, 207
 Eldredge, Elizabeth, 36, 38
 Etherington, Norman, 37
 Keegan, Tim, 136
 Legassick, Martin, 65
 Macmillan, William, 225
 Mandala, Elias, 39
 Molema, S.M., 158
 Murray, Colin, 56n17, 221
 Peires, Jeff, 85, 131–32
 Vail, Leroy, 176
 Vansina, Jan, 50
 Vaughn, Megan, 39–40
 White, Luise, 207
 Hlabangwe, David, 179
 Hodgson
 Ann, 2
 Rev. Thomas, 2, 8, 22, 24–33, 37, 41, 54,
 82, 94, 105
 Hoernlé, Winifred, 223
 Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 247
 horses, 24, 98, 112, 134, 154, 166, 196
 “hottentot(s)” (offensive), 6, 9, 11–12, 16, 22,
 76, 109, 131, 135, 145, 166, 177, 225
See also bushmen; Khoikhoi
 Huffman, T.N., 42–47, 50
 Hume, David, 3
 hunting, 3, 6, 72, 96–97, 98, 140
 Hurutshe, *see* *rotse*
 Husuni Kubwa, *see* Swahili
- immigration, 49, 70
 to Lesotho, 127, 139
 to Tati District, 177, 192–94,
 240–41, 245
 imperialism, 132, 135, 180, 187–88, 192,
 194, 209, 215, 218, 224–5, 230, 231,
 245, 247
 Orange Free State and, 136
 Sir Harry Smith and, 130
 of “Tau,” 69
 Indian Ocean, 10, 45, 56, 72
 industrial revolution, 127, 137, 149, 221
 International Commercial Workers’ Union
 (ICU), xiii, 187, 205–7, 210, 213, 215
 iron
 -age, 45, Chapter Two *passim*, 61, 72
 manufacture, 50, 64, 97–99
 plows, 137
 “praising,” 73
 trade in, 8, 12, 58, 64
 Israel, 27, 195
 Israelites (at Bullhoek), 208, 221
 ivory trade, 3, 12, 72, 176
- Jabavu, D.D.T., 215
 Jesus Christ, 28, 106, 115, 151, 184, 242
 crucified, 100–1
 Eucharist of, 151
 Moroka and, 154–55
 Jews, 15, 24, 188, 201–2, 242
See also Bible
 Johannesburg, 193, 229, 242
- K–2, 44
 Kadalie, Clements, 205–6, 210
See also International Commercial
 Workers’ Union (ICU)
 Kaditshwene, 14, 21, 37, 64–65, 73, 96, 98,
 102, 111
 “kaffir” (alt. *caffre*, *kafir*: offensive), 86, 131,
 147, 151, 203
 Basuto and, 144
 College, Zonnebloem, 149
 line (Warden’s line), 132
 Kafue River, 37, 48, 58

- Kalahari Desert, 48, 72
 Kalanga (language), 58, 64, 69, 72, 176-77, 179, 219-34, 245
See also Shona
 Kamiesberg, 15
 Kaptein, Jan, *see* Taaibosch
 Karanga, *see* Shona
 Karoo, 3, 202-5
 Kay, Rev. David and Mrs., 23-24, 79
 Keegan, Tim, 136
 Kehiloe, John S., 197, 200, 209-12, 216-17
 Kei River, 3, 131
 Kgabo (chief), 51, 70
 Kgatla (people), *see* tan monkey
 Kgompini, Daniel ("Gumpie"), 199
 Kongke, 95, 99, 100
 Khama (chief), 83, 163, 174, 178-79, 189-90
 Khoikhoi (Khoe-speaking, Khoekhoe), 3-6, 8-9, 12-14, 53, 109, 112, 114, 130, 131, 161
 "Khoisan," 1, 9, 14, 52-53, 72, 225
 Khomo (chief), 67
 Khulukwe (chief, chiefdom, tribe), 186-87, 208
 Khumalo (chief, chiefship), 83
See also Tebele
 Khunwane, 14, 21, 37, 110n5, 174, 193
 Kimberley, 138 (described), 140, 146, 152, 164, 176, 190, 193-94, 203, 207, 211, 229
See also diamonds
 Klaarwater, 12-14
See also Griqua
 Kok, 14, 134-35
 Adam, 5, 11, 16
 Adam III, 59, 200, 201
 Claas, 4
 Cornelius, 12-16, 200
 Jan, 11
 Koni (people), 1, 57
 Korana (people), 4-6, 8, 12, 16, 23-24, 28, 30, 34, 53, 73, 79, 97, 109, 114, 120, 126, 147, 154, 161, 168
 Samuel and, 156-58
 Korsten Basket Makers, 245
 Kruger, Nicolas, 121
 Kuakuakatsi, *see* Rhenoster River
 Kuper, Adam, 141
 labor, 3, 9, 29, 36, 41, 50, 78, 119, 130, 146, 158, 161, 192, 214, 218
 agrarian, 212, 223
 gender and, 138-40
 mining, 188, 222
 recruitment of, 221
 Lack, Rev. Walter, 190, 191-96, 212
 Lagden, Sir Godfrey, 188
 land, 64, 66, 69, 72-73, 122, 124, 128, 136, 141-43, 154, 189-90, 193, 205-21
 administration of, 9, 64-65, 67-68, 129-30, 130, 132, 154, 222-23, 230-32
 alienation of, 2, 5, 31, 102, 129, 139, 189, 220-21
 Basuto and, 136-40, 144
 Boers and, 119-21, 129-30, 138-39
 chiefship and, 38, 54, 61-62, 137, 154-55, 157, 159, 192-93
 church, 150
 locative (grammatical case) and, 59, 61-62
 "Nomansland," 200, 202
 ownership (landlordism), 109-10, 112, 136, 200, 220-21, 231
 "prestige," 55-63, 65, 73
 restitution, 1, 102
 Samuel Marks and, 188-89
 Tati District and, 191-95, 197, 238-41
 Thaba Nchu and, 112, 128, 141, 143, 160-61, 230-32
 Langalibalele (chief), 169, 183
 Lebetsé (lord), 151
 Le Fleur, A. A. S., 178, 187, 200-6, 208
 legislation, 145-46, 239
 Moroka and, 190
 "Native Bills," 222
 Natives' Land Act (1913), 140
 Ordinance 50, 78
 Lekgomenyane (lord), 96-97, 103
 Lemue, Rev. Prosper, 1, 18, 20
 Lepui (chief), 65
 Lesotho, 132, 139, 165, 171, 180, 186-87, 199, 235, 248-49
 Lestrade, G.P., 236
 Letlamoreng (chief), 210
 Letsie (chief), 134, 168-70
 Lichtenstein, Hinrich, 10, 54
 Lihoya (*lihoja*, *diboya*, *diboja*) (chief, chiefdom), 25, 97
 Limpopo River, 12, 44, 50, 53-55, 56, 70, 73, 84, 119, 178
 Lindley, Rev. Daniel, 83, 122-23
 Links
 Jacob, 41
 Peter, 5, 23, 30, 119-20, 127
 Linkshand (family), 66
 lion, 11n26, 21, 34, 64, 72, 96, 103, 126, 134, 137, 138, 141n100, 186, 200, 208, 219, 220
 chief as, 57-58, 61

- of junior house, 67–70
 Moletsane as, 70
 Lishuani (*dishwane*), III, 117–18
 literacy, 6, 14–15, 17, 22, 86, 115, 124, 128, 183, 185, 203, 208, 227–28, 232–36, 247
See also Bible
 Livingstone, David, 38–39, 56
 Lobengula (chief), 173
 London Missionary Society, 12, 13, 21, 23, 108, 124, 201, 226, 235, 248, 250
 Griqua and, 120
 Robert Moffat and, 76, 122
 lords, 41, 59–60, 71, 74, 96–97, 127, 138, 153, 205, 243
Lord's Prayer, The, 31–32, 89–90, 92
 Lose, 52
See also ceramics
 Lovedale College, 149, 172
 Lozi (people), *see* *rotse*
 Lugard, Lord Frederick, 209

machela (regiment), 68
 Mackenzie, John, 2
 Maclear, 201
 Macraca (alt. Makrakki) (lord), 64, 125n48
 Madikizela (chief), 245
 Maggs, Tim, 52–53, 61
 Mahura (chief), 109, 121
 maize, 36, 54, 72, 110, 137, 172, 188, 242
 Makabua, Rev., 203, 205
 Makgwareng, 46
 Makhaba (*Makaba, Makhabha*) (chief), 93, 99, 107n72, 125
 Makhetha (chief), 37
 Makuana (chief), 20
 Malawi, 39, 181, 205
 Malinowski, Bronislaw, 224
 Malope (past chief), 61–63, 67, 70
 Malotstshwane (chief), 70
 Maluti Mountains, 12, 72, III, 132, 138, 144, 200
 Mamdani, Mahmood, 209
 Mandala, Elias, 39
 Manganeng, 14
 Manyikweni, 48, 53
 Mapungubwe, 43, 44, 48, 72
 Maquassie (*makwassie, matlwase*), 26, 29–33, 68, 113
 Maremane, David, 143
 Maribaneng, 69
 Marico River, 53, 73, 83, 135
 Marillac, Gerrit de, 168
 Maritz, Gerrit, 119
 Marks, Samuel, 188–89

 Marothodi, 48, 63
 marriage, 1, 4, 13, 22, 85, 109, 154, 160, 172, 241, 246
 divorce and, 38
 forced, 38, 41, 150–51
 European, 124
 of Moshoeshoe, 133
 of Samuel, 159
 Masepa (“Masepie”) (past chief), 8, 11, 58, 69
 Mashowe (chief), 64, 121, 155, 161
 Masilo and Masiloane, 141
 Masowe, Johannes, 245–46
 Masupa, David (lord), 137
 Matabele, *see* Tebele
 Matabele, *see* Tebele
 Matiatele, 205
 Matiwane (chief), 35–36, 86n34
 Matlabi (lord), 127, 141, 143, 158, 160
 Matopo Hills (Matobo Hills), 173
 Matsheka
 John (*Lang Jan*), 167, 222
 Kali John, 215, 220, 222, 227–32, 238–40, 241, 243–44
 Matsiloje, 174–76, 179, 190, 195–99, 209, 219, 221–22, 240–44, 250
 Matthews, Z.K., 226
 Mattita, Rev. Walter, 199–200
 Mbiti, Joseph, 75
 McVeigh, Malcolm, 81
 Mengwe (chief), 62, 65
 Mentor, John, 204
 Merino sheep, 136
 Merumetsho, III, 118
 metalanguage, 79, 107
 metals, 12, 137
See also iron; trade
métis, metissage, xiv, 11–17, 22–24, 72–73, 79, 87, 109–12, 114–20, 122, 124, 131, 136–37, 144, 147, 161, 166–70, 214–18, 225–26, 236–37, 243, 249–50
 explained, 4n8, 5–6
 re Coloured, 109
 Bergenaars and, 19, 34
 and Christianity, 74–77, 96–99
 Mfazi, Rev. Moses, 197
 “Mfecane,” 11–12, 34–37, 34n84, 73, 247
See also “Difaqane”
 Mfolozi (uMfolozi) River, 73
 Mgjijima, Enoch, 208
 Mbudi, 119
 Middleburg, 240
 “Middle” River, xii, 19, 128, 134–38, 142–43, 155, 157, 170
See also Caledon

- millenarianism, millennialism, 86, 99, 100, 106, 132, 182, 244-45, 250
- Milner, Lord Alfred, 180, 188
- mines, *see* diamonds; gold mines
- missions, missionaries, 2, 8-13, 15-16, 21-22, 27-28, 56, 60, 69, 107-10, Chapter Three *passim*, 112, 120-26, 128-29, 132-33, 142-44, 149-50, 152, 163-66, 171, 181-82, 184, 192-97, 199-201, 226, 230, 248, 250
- purpose of, 116-18
- rejection of, 121
- See also* individuals by name
- Mitchell, Rev. George, 161, 230-34
- Mlanjeni (prophet, chief), 131-35
- MmaKololo (chiefdom), 37, 40, 63, 103
- See also* *rotse*
- MmaNtathisi ("Manatees"), 30, 38, 40, 83, 96, 102, 110, 118, 186
- MmaNtshopha (prophetess), 132-33
- Mochochoke, Rev. Walter, 216-17
- Modder River, 73, 135-36, 155
- "modernity," 132
- critiqued, 145, 213, 249
- modimo*, *Modimo*, 85, 87, 93, 102, 153, 173, 230, 235, 237
- See also* ancestor; God
- Modirwagale (chief), 69
- Moffat, Rev. Robert, 2, 20, 33, 36-37, 114-15, 120-24, 132, 152-53, 168, 202, 207
- ministry of, 87-107
- hymn by, 229, 248
- Rev. Broadbent's dialogue with, 89-92
- Mogalakwena River, 82
- Mogale (past chief), 62
- Mohokare River, xii, 110, 111
- See also* Caledon River
- Mohurutshe (past chieftainess), 63-71, 73, 157
- See also* *rotse*
- Moilana (Samuel Moroka's mother), 157-59
- Moilwa (chief), 120-21
- Mokaleng, *see* Motswaosele, Jacob
- Mokgothu, Samuel, 229
- "Mokohare" (Middle) River, *see* Caledon; "Middle" River; Mohokare
- Molapo (past chief), 134, 137
- Molehabangwe (chief), 11-12, 64, 104
- Molema (chief), 127
- Molema, S.M., xiii, 69, 107n68, 158
- "Molemo," 62-63, 69
- See also* *modimo*
- Moletsane (chief), 28, 33-34, 37, 59-60, 70, 97, 110, 126, 134, 137-39, 160, 186
- Molopo River, 48, 54, 63, 73, 143
- Monaheng (chief), 20, 33
- Monametse (lord), 14
- Monametsi, David, 195
- Montshiwa (alt. Montsioa) (chief), 160, 164, 166
- morafe*, 11
- Morapeli (*morwapedi*), 68
- Mopedi (chief), 63-64, 67-68
- Mopeli, Paulus, 137
- Moroas (*morwa*, pl. *barwa*), 72
- Moroka (chief), 27-28, 127, 141-46, 149-54, 163-67, 169, 174, 237-38
- Boers and, 118-20
- chiefdom of, 108-10
- circumcision of, 28-29
- death of, 156
- invoked, 222, 227, 229, 231, 233, 238-39
- kills, 32
- Siding, or Village, Stadt, 221, 243
- as a surname, 155
- trek to Thaba Nchu of, 110-12, 113
- Moroka
- Albert, S.M., 238, 240
- George Morwagabuse, 150
- Godfrey, 143, 145-46
- Dr. James S., 218-19, 221, 230, 240
- John Phetogane S. (Tshipinare) Moroka, 222, 229
- Koko, 155
- Percy Tshabadira, 124, 222, 227-31, 238-39
- Richard Tshabadira, 155
- See also* Samuel
- Morokweng, 69
- Morolong, Harry, 198-200, 242-43
- Morton, Barry, 47n12
- Mosega, 48, 83, 113
- Moseme (chief), 112, 128, 136
- Mosetlha (chief), 62
- Moshaneng, 142
- Moshoeshoe (chief), 19-20, 37, 40-41, 72, 83-84, 110-12, 115, 117-18, 120, 127-28, 130-38, 143-44, 150, 155, 161, 163, 186, 199-200, 208, 236
- Moshoete (alt. Moswete) (chief), 144, 164
- Motebang, *see* Tebele; twin courts
- Motebele, *see* Tebele; twin courts
- Motebejane, *see* Tebele; twin courts
- Mothibe (alt. Mothibi) (chief), 12, 14-16, 34, 54, 59, 64-65, 72, 96, 103, 107n88, 125, 129
- Motito (*bothitong*), 113, 120-21

- motse*, 12, 49
 Motswaosele, Jacob, 241–43
 Motuba (lord), 141, 155
 Mount (Mt.) Currie, 200, 204
moyo, *see* soul
 Moyo, Ephraim, 246
 Mpangazitha (chief), 35–36, 38
 Mphoeng (chief), 175, 178
 Mpondo (past chief, chiefdom), 135, 205,
 210, 245
 Mthethwa (past chief, chiefdom), 84
 Mzilikazi (chief), 21, 35, 37, 64, 73, 86, 93,
 96, 110, 118–20, 127, 133, 173
 See also Tebele; *zulu*
- Nama (language), 5, 30, 119
 -qua, 23, 77, 127
 Namibia, 12, 221
 Napo (past chief), 61–62
 Napoleonic Wars, 2
naties, 121, 154, 239
 See also ethnicity; tribe
 nationalism, 84, 131–32, 180, 212, 239, 241,
 244–45, 248
 “Native,” xii, 104, 122, 128–29, 131, 136,
 145–46, 149, 165, 174, 176, 180, 192,
 211, 221–23, 224, 226, 249
 métis and, 202–6, 208
 “Native experts,” 188, 190, 192
 Native Administration Act (1927), 109, 209,
 211, 220, 238
 Native Affairs Department (NAD), 181–82,
 186, 192, 208, 214–15, 217, 220–23,
 227–28, 230, 232, 238–40
 “Native Bills,” *see* legislation
 Native Economic Commission (NEC), 219,
 228
 “Native Reserves,” 191–92, 196, 228,
 240–41, 243
 Natives’ Land Act (1913), 190, 193
 Nazarite Church (*Isonto lamaNazareth*),
 see Shembe, Isaiah
 Ndebele, *see* Tebele
 Ndongondwane, 46
 Ndwandwe (chief, chiefdom), 84
 Nettleton, G.E., 194, 219–22
 Newlanders, 118
 See also Bastards; Griqua; *métis*
 New Platberg, 110, 118, 122
 “New Zealanders,” 28, 122
 Ngakantsi
 Daniel, 231–32
 David, 157–60, 167
 Jacob, 140
 Ngidi, William, Jonathan, and
 Mbiyana, 171
 Nguni (linguistic designation), 54, 57, 60–64,
 83–87, 134
 See also grasslands
 Ngwaketse (chief, chiefdom), 58, 63, 97, 99,
 101–2, 120, 125
 Ngwane (chief, chiefdom), 35–36, 73, 84
 Ngwato (chief, chiefdom), 63, 68, 171, 174,
 178, 189, 198, 226, 233, 237
 See also Khama; Raditladi
 Niger-Congo (linguistic designation), 47
 Nkope, *see* ceramics
 Nku, Rev. Christinah, 242
 Notwane River, 73
 Nta River, 67
 Nthethe (chief), 68
 Ntsikana (pastor), 86, 171
 Ntsoana Tsatsi, 61
 Nxele (alt. Makana, Makanda) (chief),
 86–87, 131
 Okavango River, 37, 47, 48
 Oori River, 50, 63
 oral tradition, 57, 59–71, 225, 246
 of the crocodile, 70–73
 of *fokeng*, 61–62, 158, 174
 of the lion, 67–70
 of the twin court, 59–67
 Orange Free State, 129, 136–38, 140,
 143–44, 150, 152–55, 161, 168, 170, 179,
 187, 190, 239
 Orange River, 3–12, 16, 21, 23, 25, 30, 34,
 60, 68, 73, 97, 109–10, 129
 Orange River Colony, 136
 Orange River Sovereignty, *see* Orange Free
 State
 Orphen, Joseph, 200
 Oudtshoorn, 202–4
 Owen and Hogge Commission, 136
 Owen, Rev. Francis, 120–21, 132
 Panzera, F. W., 188, 191–93, 195
 Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS),
 18–20, 60, 127, 131, 199, 236
 partnerships in politics, 17, 42, 50, 58, 64,
 68–70, 78, 156, 207, 209–12, 245
 pass laws, 80, 97, 145, 163, 172, 196, 199,
 204, 220–21, 229, 231
 Patani (chief), 65
 peasants and peasantry, xiii, 110, 137, 142,
 178, 186–88, 212, 216, 223, 230, 231,
 244
 See also cattle; farmers; food; grain

- Pedi (chiefdom), 83, 127, 135, 138–39, 186, 233, 248
- Peete (alt. Pete) (lord), 19, 133
- Peires, Jeff, 85, 131–32
- Pentecost, Pentecostalism, 118, 181–83, 199
See also apocalypse; Christianity; millenarianism
- petitions, 186–91, 197, 212, 219
- Phalaborwa, 8, 48, 64
- Phalane (people), 1
- Philippolis, 21, 76, 107–9, 113, 120, 122, 124
- Philip, Rev. John, 10, 14, 76, 108, 120
- Phogole (people), 1
- photography, 117, 138, 146–49, 161, 225
- Phuthing (totem, people), 1, 64, 68
- pico*, *see pitso*
- Piekethberg, 5
- Pienaar (family), 5
- Pifo (lord), 96–103, 114, 121
- pigs, 182, 198–99, 206
- pitso*, 11, 114, 155, 231–32, 238–39
- Plaatje, Solomon K., 119
- Platberg, 21, 110, 144
- Plumtree, 198, 221
- Pokwane, 240
- police, xiii, 191, 194, 196, 199, 203–6, 208, 211, 247, 249
 Barolong Progressive Association and, 229, 231–32
 Christianity and, 123
 Tati District and, 216
 Tshipinare's, 155
- politics (defined), xi, xiii, 213
- Pondoland, 205, 210
See also Mpondo
- poor whites, 117, 121, 123–24, 131, 133–34
See also Boers; Coloured; Europeans; *métis*
- population figures, 52, 54, 71–72, 112, 116, 137, 139, 142–43, 168, 211, 222, 240
- Portuguese, 2, 42, 47, 53, 58, 65, 101n77, 188
- Potchefstroom Convention, 178
- Potgieter, Andries Hendrick, 8–9, 11, 121, 130
- praises and praising, *see bina*
- prayer and praying, 18, 22–23, 81–82, 89–91, 94, 100–2, 105, 115–17, 131, 142–45, 150–52, 171, 182, 185, 189, 198, 210, 215, 217, 231, 239, 246
- preaching, 31–32, 77n7, 89, 95, 97–98, 101, 106, 122, 142–45, 151–52, 172, 182–83, 185, 189, 199, 202–4, 207, 242–44, 246
- prestige-place association, 56–58, 60, 62–65, 67, 69, 73
- Pretoria, 173
- Pretorius, Andries (Boer), 130
- Pretorius, Andries (*métis*), 12
- Pretorius, Barend and Gert, 165–66
- Price, Roger Rev., 2
- Prieska, 6
- Pringle, Thomas, 86
- Pule (lord), 135
- pygmies, 50
- Queen, 136, 164, 171
- race and racism, 3–4, 7, 27, 79, 85, 122–23, 129, 145–46, 151, 156–58, 172, 200–1, 213
- Radcliffe-Brown, A.R., 224, 226–7
- Raditladi (chief), 178
- railway, 174, 176, 193, 221
- Rand, the, *see* gold mining; Johannesburg
- rain, 79–83, 91, 94, 102, 105, 135, 165, 229, 237
- Ramagaga
 Elias, 222
 Elijah, *see* Elisha
 Elisha, 229, 239
 Zachariah, 197
- Ramajafi, Job, 165, 167
- Ramaquabana (alt. Ramakgwebama, Ramakgwebana) River, 174, 175, 178, 221, 234
- Ramatlabama, 210
- rankings, 1, 15, 29, 40, 53, 57–58, 62, 64–66, 68, 70, 82, 91, 96, 108–9, 112, 114, 127–29, 140–41, 154, 156, 189, 196–97, 244, 247
See also alliance; circumcision
- Rastafarianism, 207
- Ratlou (chief), 69, 97
- Rawe (Rawe Sekoko) (chief), 175, 177
- Read, Rev. James Snr., 12–16, 77n6, 78, 87, 95, 107, 120
- Retief, Piet, 120
- Retief, Rev. J.A., 203
- Rheinallt Jones, J.D., 227, 232
- Rhenoster River, 52, 67–68
- Rhodes, Cecil John, 178
- Rinderpest, the, 172
- Robben Island, 146
- Rogers, Robert Athlyi, 207
- Rolland, Rev. Samuel, 18n45, 132
- rolong* (prestige-place association), 1, 8, 22, 27, 34, 55, 58, 62, 64, 69–70, 73, 96–98, 108–9, 112, 114, 119, 200

- Ba- (*barolong*, Barolong, “Baralong”), 167, 215–23, 227
 becomes Barolong (tribe), 124–31, 135, 138, 147, 149, 153–58
 defined, 57, 72
 reduction of meaning of, 153–58
 Roman Catholic Church, 143, 173
 Rooikrans, 46
rotse (prestige-place association), 29, 59–60, 62–63, 65, 67–71, 72–73, 83, 96–98, 101–3, 108–9, 151, 157, 177, 187, 207, 226, 237, 245–47
 Ba-ha- (*babarotse*, Bahurutshe, Bakhurutshe, Bafhurutshe), 1, 29, 54–55, 59n47, 119–22, 177, 187, 245, 247
 defined, 54–55, 121
rozi, *see rotse*
 Rozvi, 53–59, 59n47, 67n67, 73
See also rotse
 rumor, 182, 207, 211, 231
 Rustenberg District, 187
- Sabe (alt. Save) River, 12, 53
 S-Group Bantu languages, *see* Bantu
 Sahba, Piet, 109
 St. Augustine’s College, 150
 St. John’s Apostolic Church, 242
 Samuelites, xii, 153–54, 160
 committees of, 193–95
 denouement of, 208–12
 millenarianism and, 198–200
 search for land by, 187–98
 self-fashioning of, 215–22, 227–30, 232, 238–45
 Samuel (Samuel Lefhulere Moroka)
 early life of, 149–61
 expressions of, 215–21, 240–43
 land-purchase plan, 191–200, 205, 208–13
 in Tati District, 174–79, 187–90
 in Thaba Nchu, 163–70
 Sandile (chief), 131
 Satan, 87, 105–6, 115, 120
 Schapera, Isaac, 59, 62–63, 69, 80, 84, 97, 124
The Bantu-Speaking Tribes of South Africa (1937), 226
 collection of material by, 232–38, 240–41
 early life of, 223–27
The Ethnic Composition of Tswana Tribes (1952), 236–38
A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom (1938), 236
- The Khoisan Peoples of South Africa* (1930), 225
 Schultze, Leonard, 225
 Schwarz, E.H.L., 226
 Sebege (chief), 101–2
 Sechele (chief), 70, 73
 Sechuana (language of the highveld), xvi, 1, 4, 12, 16, 37, 55–56, 58, 72, 77, 80, 89, 95, 101, 103, 108, 110, 114, 129, 147, 152–53, 173–74, 189, 217, 232
 differentiation from Setswana of, 95
 names in, 129–30
 origin of concept of, 10–12
 Robert Moffat and, 98–99, 155–52
 as written, 124
See also Basuto; Bechuana; Tswana
 Sefunelo (chief), 23–34, 36–37, 41, 59, 68–70, 77, 87, 94–97, 104, 126, 153, 186
 Sefunelo (son of Moroka), 108, 110, 134–35 (death), 154, 156–59
sego and *segwana*, 82, 91, 106
 Segopa, Paul, 198
 Segregation, 30, 122, 181, 185, 208–12, 216, 236, 240
See also court; legislation
 Seitshiro (chief), 69
 Sekaniela, *see* Sekonyela
 Sekgoma (chief), 28
 Sekgoma, Rev. Peter, 198
 Sekhukhune (chief), 115
 Sekoati, *see* Sekwati
 Sekonyela (chief), 20, 96, 110, 112, 118, 127, 133, 136
 Sekwati (chief), 83, 135
 Sekwati Mampuru, 240
 Selbourne, Lord (W.W. Palmer), 180, 188–89
 Seleka (chief, chiefdom), 26–27, 31, 33, 39, 64, 66, 68–70, 96–97, 126–27, 134–35, 141, 149, 163–64, 209, 217
 defined, 25
 Isaac Schapera and, 237–38, 240, 245
See also rolong
 Sepitwane (chief), 58–59
 Serrakutu (lord), 12
 Setabeng, 96–99, 100
 Setilo (lord), 127
 Setlogelo, Abraham, 165
 Seitshiro (chief), 69
 Setswana, xvi, 8–10, 95, 233
See also Sechuana
 Seventh Day Adventists, 181
 Shaka, Shaka Zulu, 35, 83–86, 134, 186, 210
See also “Mfecane”
 Shakespeare, 104–5

- sharecropping, 171, 178, 188, 190, 207, 222, 236, 248
- Shashi River, 48, 174, 175, 190, 234
- Shaw, Rev. William, 2, 25, 88, 136
- sheep, 32, 118, 127, 136, 183
- Shembe, Isaiah, 178, 183–86, 199, 206, 208
- Shirazi, *see* Swahili
- Shona (people), 44–47, 49, 54–56, 64, 72, 173–74
See also Kalanga
- Shoshong, 14, 46, 56, 137
- Shrewsbury, Rev. William, 2
- Sia (people), 1, 63–64
- Sichuaan, *see* Sechuana
- Silver Fountain, 23
- Slavery and slaves, 3, 36, 41, 47, 53, 83, 108, 142, 221
 abolition of, 129–31
 anti-slavery and, 12, 108
 Boers and, 112, 134
 raids and, 130
- Smith, Sir Andrew, 2, 54–58, 69, 87, 109, 117, 126
- Smith, E.W., 2, 226
- Smith, Harry, 128, 130, 131
- Smuts, Jan Christian, 181, 196
- Sneeuberg San, 50, 53
See also Bushmen
- Soldaat, Jeremy or Jeremiah, 221–22, 228
- Somerset, Lord Charles Henry, 131
- Sopane (lord), 135
- sorghum, 96
See also grain
- soul, 82, 92–94, 99, 106, 115, 183–84, 229, 240
- South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), 223
- South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC), 180–81, 188
- South African Native National Congress, *see* African National Congress (ANC)
- South African Republic (ZAR), 137, 139–41, 179
- South African War, 174, 178–80
- South West Africa, *see* Namibia
- Soutpan, 163
- Spanish Influenza, 194
- Spiritual Healing Church (SHC), 243–44
- Stanley, Lord, Earl of Derby, 163
- Steelpoort River, 21, 83, 139
- Stellenbosch, 76
- stock-farming, xii, 1, 6, 9, 44–46, 91–93, 96, 102, 114, 117, 165, 169, 177–78, 183, 189, 192, 196, 219
- dipping and, 191
 metaphors drawn from, 106, 169
 and Trust lands, 231–32, 238, 240, 243
- Stockenström, Andries, 17, 86
- stone walling, 42–45, 48, 52–53, 56–57, 64, 65–66, 72, 91, 246
- Stormsvlei, 205
- Stow, George, 35, 69, 186
- Swahili, 45
- Swazi (Mswati, uMswati) (chief), 20
- Swaziland, 180
- Taaibosch, 12, 13, 28, 119, 127, 136
 Gert, 133
 Jan (Jan Kaptein), 118–19
- Tabana (alt. Thabane), *see* Tebele
- tan monkey (people), 1, 29, 40, 51, 55, 62–64, 225, 237
 Kgafela, 62, 137
 Kgatla, 1, 64
- Tati
 Barolong Progressive Association and, 239–46
 Company, 177
 District, 174–78, 187–90, 195–98, 209, 215–22, 230
 land purchase attempt, 190–94
- Tau, *see* lion
- Taung, 63–64, 67, 113, 180
- Tawana (chief), 58–59, 70
See also lion
- Tebele (chief, “senior court”), 62, 63–68, 71, 127, 135, 141
 – ane (dim.), 68–69, 71
 Ma- (also AmaNdebele), 21, 35, 37, 57, 60, 64–65, 67, 83, 108, 110, 119–20, 133, 173–74, 187
 Mo – ane (dim.), 63, 65–66, 246
 Mo – (chief), 62–67, 246
 twin courts and, 141
- text, *see* Bible; literacy
- Thaba Nchu, 21, 111, 112–19, 122, 127–46, 150–56, 158, 160–70, 174, 179, 190–200, 207–11
- Thabeng, 14, 26–29, 66, 69, 82, 87, 89
- Thaele, James, 206
- Theal, George M., 35, 119
- theology, 75, 103–7, 197–98
 African Independent Church, 242–43
 confessional difference in, 152
 early discussion of, 89–92
 terms in, 91, 116
- Thom, Rev. George, 76
- Thovela (past chief), 56, 67

- Thulamela, 48, 53
 Thulare (chief), 63–64, 67
 Thuloane (chief), 67
 Tile, Rev. Nehemiah, 171
 time, 76, 87, 88–89
 Tiyali (chief), 169
 Tlala (chief), 110, 127, 153, 159
 Tlhaping, *see* fish, place of
 Tlharo (past chief, people), 8, 34
 Tlokwa (past chief, people), 1, 36, 38, 63–64, 186–87, 234, 237
tlou, *see* elephant
 tobacco, 3, 7, 30, 72, 94, 188, 199
 as bribe, 101
 rain and, 79–83
torwa, Torwa, 43, 46, 53, 207
 totems, 51, 53, 57, 60, 63, 65–68, 70–71
 See also specific animal
 Toutswemogala, Toutswe, 48, 51, 72
 Tows River, 202
 towns, 1, 14, 42–53, 56–58, 62–66, 70–72, 84, 88, 97, 153–55
 chiefs and, 97
 decentralization of, 43, 57
 gender and, 91
 mixed nature of, 41, 56–57, 93, 109, 161
 Orange Free State, 143
 trade, 2–4, 11–12, 20, 35, 50, 53, 65, 72, 78, 99
 translation, 4, 15, 79, 81, 87–95, 98–100, 168, 183, 210, 218, 225, 229, 240
 in Bible, 18–19, 100, 102–6, 115–17, 123
 of God, 18–19
 rotse and, 56
 Transvaal, *see* Vaal
 tribe, xi, 1–2, 7–10, 17–20, 24, 27–28, 33, 38, 41, 46, 59, 77, 67, 73, 81, 96, 109–12, 123, 124–37, 192–93, 197
 Central Cattle Plan and, 50, 54
 Griqua and, 121
 making of, 140–49, 154, 161
 self-representation as, 169, 186–87
 See also Schapera, Isaac; land; ethnicity
 Trust and Land Act (1936), 222–3, 230–2
 Tshabadira (chief), 25–26, 31, 34, 135
 Tshawe (chief), 85, 104
 Tshidi (chief, chiefdom), 34, 69–70, 108, 110–12, 126–27, 134, 141, 226
 Tshipinare (chief), 110, 112, 134, 141, 149–61
 Buku, 166
 Ellen, 168
 Joel, 165–67
 Tsindi, 53
 Tsukulu (chief), 67
 Tswana, 9, 49, 113, 54–56, 81–82, 95, 210, 224–28, 236–37, 244
 See also Bechuana
 Tswapong, 56, 71, 82
 Twells, Bishop Edward, 150, 152
 twin courts, 6, 7, 21, 41, 57–59, 62–70, 72, 84, 108–12, 141, 155, 157, 161, 207, 243–46
 Uithaalter, Wilem, 131, 135
 Umtata, 144
Umteteli wa Bantu, 229
 Umvoti, 172
 up, 32, 84, 86, 88–90, 93, 144
 See also zulu
 Urewe, *see* ceramics
 Vaal River, xiii, 21, 24–25, 37, 52, 62, 65, 67–68, 73, 83, 87, 109, 112, 115, 130, 138, 141, 143
 Trans-, 65, 119–21, 130, 135, 142, 145, 239–40
 Vail, Leroy, 176
 Van der Kemp, Rev. Johannes Theodorus, 12, 88
 Van Riebeeck, Jan, 4, 247
 Vansina, Jan, 50
 Varembe (people), 54–56
 Vaughn, Megan, 39
 Vegkop, 119
 Venda (people), 64, 178
 Vereeniging Estate, 188
 Viervoet, 111, 134, 151, 154, 156, 158, 160
 violence, *see* war
 voice, 32, 92–93, 103, 135
Volkundiges, 225, 236
 Vrede District, 186, 227–29, 250
 Vryburg, 95, 180
 war and warfare, 3, 5–6, 11, 19–20, 31, 36–41, 65, 72, 86–87, 173, 215
 Basuto and, 133–35, 137, 140–42, 144, 159
 Boers and, 138
 of the Cannon, cattle and, 37–38
 Coloureds and, 135
 gender and, 40, 65, 68–70, 96
 Matebele and, 83–84, 120
 midcentury war(s), 131–36, 200
 over Thaba Nchu succession, 159–60, 164–70
 violence and, 53, 56, 65, 164–67, 168–70, 179, 182
 Warden, Major Henry, 130, 135–36, 139, 154

- Watchtower (Jehovah's Witnesses), 181
 Waterboer
 Andries, 13, 23–24, 33, 35, 78, 106, 114, 135, 200
 Nicolas, 200
 Weber, Max, 142
 Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS, MMS), 6, 15, 22–24, 28, 30, 33, 97, 114–15, 120, 123, 135, 162–63, 168, 174, 243
 West Indies, 181, 206–7
 wheat, 110, 137
 White, Luise, 137
 Wikar, Hendrik J., 6–7, 58, 82
 wildlife, 3, 88, 96–97, 98, 115, 118, 140, 236
 See also hunting
 Wilge River, 73
 Willoughby, Rev. William Charles, 2
 Willow River (*Mohokare*), *see* Caledon River; “Middle” River
 Winberg, 134, 193
 witchcraft, 172, 206
 Witsieshoek, 187, 240
 Wittenbergen, 142
 women
 African Independent Churches and, 185
 farming and, 96
 girlhood, 15, 23, 37
 as leaders, 39–40, 157
 in oral tradition, 60
 violence toward, 96
 war and, 38, 40
 widowhood of, 159
 See also farming; gender
 Wookey, Rev. A.J., 235

 Xaba, Rev. Jacob, 179
 Xhosa (language, people), 85, 88, 131–32, 169, 205, 237
 Xiri (language), 12

 youngmen (*magasa* age regiment), 38–41, 195–99, 200, 210

 Zambesi (later Zambezi) River, 46, 49, 72, 101
 Zambia, 207
 Zhizo, *see* ceramics
 Zimbabwe, 149, 173, 198, 221, 233, 245
 Zimbabwe birds, 44, 57
 Zimbabwe Plan (ZP), 4, 42–47, 51–53, 57, 65
 Zimbabwean highlands, 1, 12, 51–53, 56, 73, 173, 221
 “Zion” churches, 181, 184–85, 218
 Zonnebloem College, 149–50
 zulu and Zulu, 35–37, 73, 83–85, 89, 108, 119–20, 121, 172, 183, 184–85, 206, 237, 248
 See also up