

Leaving Thaba Ncho in three large parties according to their clans - Ratlou, (Gontse) Tshidi (Tawana) and Rapulana (Matlaba) the Barolong passed by Maje-masweu, to the north-east of Brandfort^{Rt}, crossed the Valsch River (Ntha) halfway between its confluence with the Vaal and the present site of Krommstad, crossed the Vaal River (Lekwa) a little below its confluence with the ^{RH}~~the~~ Senost-er River and did not halt for a long time anywhere until they reached the Matlwang Hills (Machavie) on the Mooi River (Tlokweng) to the west of the present town of Potchefstroom. Here a rest was made to take advantage of the planting season at a place later to be named Potchefstroom. Comm Hendrik Potgieter, the great friend of the Barolong was at this time at the Mooi River. Heis and stated to have said that Moroka, Tawana, Gontse and Matlaba had the surrounding farms were already occupied by Dutch emigrants come to him to express their desire (for the three latter) to return to their country at the Molopo River, and their willingness to live under the laws and jurisdiction of the Boer emigrants, that they further asked him to guarantee them against molestation by the Boer farmers while traversing their territory, and that he issued them a pass enabling the clans to travel through Boer farms on condition that the people committed no aggression in the course of their journey (J. Agar-Hamilton: The Native Policy of the Voortrekkers p. 54). And The surrounding farms were already ex-

occupied by Dutch emigrants who knew the Barolong from Thaba Ncho and were friendly disposed towards them. They all co-operated, therefore in making the sojourn of Gontse, Tawana and Matlaba and their clans pleasant, and the idea of a pass is strangely inconsistent with the time and circumstances.

H. Matlwang, Gontse and his people built their huts to the east on Kgaba-tse-Phal-tsho hill while the Tshidi of Tawana built to the south on ~~Phal-tsho~~ akgomo, and the Rapulana of Matlaba occupied the hills Maje-a-ma-redi on the north side. The halt at Matlwang was not meant to be of long duration, but for some reason or another, the Barolong stayed here from year to year from the summer of 1841 till the spring of 1848. The seasons were favourable and labour in the fields among the Boer farmers received its due reward. Relations with the Dutch-Afrikaners at Potchefstroom (founded 1838) and the surrounding country were amicable. It was not until 1845 that the Ratlou clan of Gontse moved from Matlwang, but it was not to go far. They went ~~past~~ ^{past} Mutswana, a flat-topped hill on the east side of the Schoonspruit, and therefore also called Plaatberg by the Dutch-Boers. Having crossed the river they halted above its west bank at Motswi-wa-petlwana, at place now known as Laapfontein and Kafferskraal. The remains of their stones kraals are still to be seen on the hills and have no doubt suggested the exalted name Kafferskraal.

Tawana and Matlaba and their respective Tshidi and Rapulana clans stayed behind at Matlwang. Montshiwa was now a man of 30 years. Besides the three wives he had married at Thaba Ncho, he had now taken another, namely Onyana, daughter of Nea Dingoko, one of his father's counsellors. *Onyana had been married to Tsho Segolshane son of King Makaba and had three children. Montshiwa eloped with her and subsequently had issue with her in two sons Makgetla and Tawana. Elopement with other men's wives was quite in vogue in those days - especially in high Tswana Society. No stigma was attached to it.* For many months chief Tawana was in poor health, and in 1848, feeling that the end was near and being desirous to be buried in his native land, he decided to leave Matlwang and return to the Molopo. The Tshidi Barolong accordingly turned their backs on Matlwang in

1841

6

1848

1848

August 1848. Their route was by Mutswana (Plaatberg) on ^{the} Schoonspruit), Lomawe (Goedgevonden) across Khing (Schoonspruit) to Mogodiring (Taaiboschspruit), Matlape (Coligny) to Ditsobotla (Lichtenburg), and thence through Bodibe (Pohlfontein) to Lotlhakane (Reitfontein) and Dithakong where they arrived ^{at the end of September. Shortly after their arrival. In the middle of 1849} Tawana, now an old man of some 75 winters, called his tribe together and gave them final instructions.

1849

After a few more weeks towards the end of October 1849 he closed his eyes in death and was buried in his cattle enclosure ^{at Dithakong in the valley} at Lotlhakane, according to custom.

He was survived by his three widows Mma-Sefera- daughter ^{the Banguakakie Chief} of Makaba, Mojanku and Monjankunyana - both daughters of Marumula Makgetla, his other five having perished at the sack ⁽¹⁸³²⁾ of Khunwana. He was survived also by nine sons and six daughters. The sons were Montshiwa, Marumulwa, Selere, Seru, Montshiwane, Motshegare, Molema, Saane and Rabodietso and the daughters Morwanyane, Motshidisi, Mamoraila, Manca, Majang and Keithufile. Several of the sons subsequently made a mark in Barolong history. Of the daughters only one is important, namely Majang, because she became wife of his heir and successor Montshiwa.

CHAPTER V PART II

1849

MONTSHIWA BECOMES CHIEF:

Tawana the great chief of the Tshidi clan of the Barolong had been buried according to ancient custom, in the royal cattle enclosure or kraal at ^{Dithakong near} Lotlhakane, actually in fact at what is now called Dithakong, which is however not to be confused with the more famous place of that name in the Vryburg district which was the scene of Rev Robert Moffat's missionary activities before his removal to Kuruman in 1820.

The burying of chiefs in cattle enclosures makes it impossible to locate their graves after a few years, and I have failed to locate Tawana's.

In accordance with Tswana law, after Tawana's death, the

At his accession Montshiwa was of middle stature, chubby face, pock marked by the small-pox of 1831, broad shoulders and athletic form. He had a slight impediment of speech, ~~his s~~ his 's' tending to be pronounced 'sh'. He was noted for his courage, his humour, his kindness and generosity. ^{was not without} Montshiwa's accessions ~~of polygamous~~ those querries that arise in nearly all successions of polygamous chiefs, especially where the Israelitish ^h practice of the levirate or a man raising seed to a deceased brother is in vogue. The facts with regards to Montshiwa are as follows: Montshiwa's grandfather - Tlhutlwa had several sons - some of them natural, most of them putative - by several wives. These sons were Tau, Tawana and Moshwela by three sisters; Lekgetho by a fourth wife, Legae and Lekone by a fifth, Masetlha by a sixth and Matsheka by a seventh wife (see table). Tau who should have ~~succeeded should have~~ succeeded his father Tlhutlwa

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Tlhutlwa in the chieftaiship had died in early youth, perhaps at the age of fifteen years before marring or having issue, and so his younger brother Tawana became the heir presumptive. On the decease of Tlhutlwa, Makgetla, and after him Leshomo acted for Tawana, ~~liking~~ although he was already a man, married and childed. First he had married Dikgang, daughter of Leshomo, by whom he had four daughters only and no male issue. Then he married Mosela, daughter of the Rap-ulana chief Molekane. By her he had ^{five} ~~four~~ sons - ~~xxxxxx~~ Setsela, Tlala, Motshegare, Molema and Phetogane, and one daughter- Majang. Tawana then married Sebudio, daughter of Phetlhu Makgetla, and therefore his own cousin, and gave out that by her he was raising seed for Tau, his elder brother long deceased in boyhood. By this step, ~~the~~ the issue by Sebudio was to take precedence over issues or children by previous unions or wives, Sebudio being now regarded ceremoniously as the wife, and her issue in Montshiwa, ~~xxxxxx~~ Marumulwa, ~~Setare~~ and ~~Seru~~ as the children of the deceased Tau. So while in the ordinary straightforwrd way the eldest son Seetsela (or his son or brother) should have been Tawana's principal heir and successor, Montshiwa and ~~xxxxxx~~ other sons by Sebudio being raised as seed and being counted to Tau took precedence.

CHAPTER VI. WHITE POLITICS AND POLICIES to next Page

Montshiwa assumed his duties as chief about the end of the year 1849 at Lotlhakane. His people were just settling down to normal life after much moving about and an absence of 18 years from their country. One of his first acts was to send his brother Molema to Thaba Ncho to request the Wesleyan District Missionary Society for a teacher or ~~missionary~~ missionary. There can be no doubt ^{and advice} that this step was taken at the inst- tance/ of Molema himself, who, although he had betrayed the tribe by accepting a foreign faith - the Christian doctrine- at Thaba Ncho had publicly received the express permission of their father Tawana to practice that faith untrammelled. Molema was, moreover a man of strong personality and exceptional gifts. He had great influence in the tribe, and was in fact Montshiwa's chief counsellor in vital matters. He would have no great difficulty in ~~in~~ convincing the chief of the the overwhelming advantage of having a missionary adviser at his court. Montshiwa himself had been witness of the incalculable benefits of the enlightened services rendered by the Revs. James Archbell

and James Cameron to Chief Moreka in his external ~~relations~~ affairs. He had for himself seen how the French missionaries - T. Arbousset, ~~Euge~~ Eugene Casalis and others guided and piloted Moshoeshoe through the labyrinthine intricacies of European diplomacy which sought and threatened to entangle him. Who else could intelligently handle the interviews the requests for grazing, for land and for labour, the endless procession of hunting parties, the disputes about straying and stolen cattle, the questions and arguments about the vague dividing line between the Boers and the Barolong? Who otherwise could read, and having read understand and answer the letters, written in stately Hollandsch, that were already pouring into Montshiwa's office under the tree of justice? All these things required, not only a thorough knowledge of the Dutch and Tswana languages, but also a skill in argument and negotiation in the European manner - matters which neither Montshiwa nor the ablest of his counsellors had any experience of. And so Molema went to Thaba Ncho, and having placed Montshiwa's case before the Wesleyan District Missionary Meeting in December, that body appointed the Rev Joseph D. M. Ludorf to be Montshiwa's missionary, and with Molema he proceeded to and arrived at Lotlhakane - Montshiwa's town on the Molopo, in January 1850.

Chapter VI White Politics and Policies

The assumption of the chieftainship by Montshiwa seemed to be a signal of dispute and strife between the Dutch Boers and the Tshidi Barolong, dispute and strife destined to last throughout the long reign of Montshiwa - 46 years.

1851 In 1851 some Dutch farmers came to settle well to the west of Lichtenburg upon land claimed by Montshiwa at the eye of the Molopo R., at Poosedumane (Grootfontein) and at Mooimeisjesfontein. After warning them several times to quit, but in vain, Montshiwa made a formal protest to Commandant-General Andries J. Pretorius, newly appointed Commandant General of Potchefstroom and Rustenburg districts. Pretorius replied immediately :

Aan het Opperhoofd der Barolong, addressing him "Waarde Vriend en Bondgenoot Montsioa.", expressing regret to hear that the emigrant Dutch farmers had encroached on his territory, and notifying him that he was appointing a Commission to go into the matter.

On the 30th December 1851, the Commission met Montshiwa at the eye of the Molopo R. It consisted of Pieter Scholtz and Adriaan Stander accompanied by two field-cornets and ten farmers. Montshiwa came ~~with~~ with his two brothers Motshegare and Molema, accompanied by twenty other counsellors including the Rev Joseph Ludorf as interpreter. After a friendly discussion a boundary line between the Dutch emigrants and the Tshidi Barolong was agreed upon. This line which the historian G.M.Theal repeatedly alludes to but seems studiously to omit to ~~mention~~ specify in his otherwise very informative and factually reliable works, this line was from Mosega to Ottoshoop, thence by wagon road to Buurmansdrift, thence to the source of the Hartz R, and down along that river to a point opposite Makwassie. (Report of the Land Commission p.81; and Evidence at the Bloemhof Inquiry p. 183.)

The Conference broke up with renewed mutual assurances of friendship and goodwill.

In due course the ~~terms~~ findings of the Commission and its terms of agreement with the Barolong were laid before the Volksraad, and immediately after this, to wit on the 8th of January 1852, from Magaliesburg, Comm-Gen Pretorius, in the same courteous manner and tone of absolute sincerity communicated to Montshiwa the Volksraad's approval of the Commissions recommendations. The letter reads :-

Waarde Vriend en Bondgenoot Montsioa,

Met genoegen heb ik de Rapport van de Hge Commissie ontvangen aangaande de grenslyn. Ik heb hetzelfde voor de raad gelegd en zy heb het namens de Regering der Emigranten Boeren hunne goekeering daar aan gehegt. Ik vertrouw dat in het toekomstige geen inbreuk op u gronden zal gemaakt worden, en dat by u zyde alle pogingen zult aanwenden uw volk in goe ... en regel te houden dat onze vriendschaap nog lang zal duur.

Uw D.W Dienaar en Vriend,

A.J.W.Pretorius :

Comd-Gen.

Implicit in these conferences and letters is the recollection by Comm-Gen Pretorius and others of the friendly relations that had existed between the emigrant Boers and the Barolong since the Thaba Ncho days, and the occasion of their alliance against Mzilikazi. ~~xxx~~ Explicit is the hope that that friendship founded under such tragic circumstances might continue from generation to generation, but above all the fact that Montshiwa had territorial rights which, not only Pretorius but also the Volksraad and the emigrant Boers generally recognised and acknowledged.

It is beyond question that Pretorius and the emigrant Boers at this time recognised the Barolong as a free and independent people, and had no visible designs upon their land and liberty. The tone of the conferences and the discussions show that the Boers and the Barolong met as equals and spoke as man to man. The words ~~of address~~ - "Worthy Friend and Ally" always used by Pretorius in addressing Montshiwa were no meaningless effusion.

1851

About the middle of the year 1851, the Ratlou clan ~~of Gontse~~ left Motswiapetlwana (Laapfontein) on the Schoonspruit, and arrived at Lotlhakane in two parties under Masisi and Gontse respectively. ~~Max~~ Masisi's party was the larger, and had left Motswiapetlwana by reason of discontent. Gontse was the Ratlou regent - acting for Mos-hete, and had been for years 27, Masisi who was of senior status felt that Gontse should have stood aside for him, and so he left to start his own show. Soon after he had arrived at Lotlhakane, Gontse came with his group. He had left Motswiapetlwana because of a quarrel between his people and the surrounding Dutch farmers on the Schoonspruit, one of whom, ^{Hendrik} Van Der Merwe had lost his goats and sheep, and having traced their spoor to Gontse's village held him accountable for them.

1852

In January 1852, a strange document known as the Sand River Convention was concluded between Great Britain and the South African Republic. Its terms were all previously prepared and were now proposed by the delegates of the Emigrant Boers and were readily agreed to by the British Commissioners without ~~any~~ scrutiny. In fact the Conference seems to have been a pure formality, and that the British Commissioners came with their mind made up to shed what they ^{and the British ministry in England} considered an intolerable burden of dominion. By it, the British Government guaranteed absolutely independence to the Dutch Boers beyond the Vaal River. It also bound itself not to make any alliances with African tribes nor to sell them firearms or ammunition.

The elation of the emigrant Boers over the terms of the agreement was perfectly understandable. It was a victory for their diplomacy

African

and determination, for the tenacity of their view on African affairs or the so-called native policy in which they were to prove so different from, and even opposite to their English adversaries in after years and up to this day. The Sand River Convention was their Magna Charter, their Bill of Liberty. They had won their independence after striving for it for 16 years, and, says their historian, "men who had never been moved to shed a tear by all the blows that disaster had struck were strangely moved that day." (Theal 1834-1854 p. 487).

Not so the Africans, not so the Batswana, not so the Barolong of Montshiwa. They could congratulate the Dutch Boers, or for that matter any nation for achieving ~~for~~ the boon of independence, the question of ^{their own} alliance with the British or with the Boers did not worry them if they were left to live their lives in peace, but they heard with real dismay that they were prohibited from purchasing firearms and ammunition from both European races and wondered how they could defend themselves from one or the other if they should be ^{molested,} provoked or despoiled.

The terms of the Sand River Convention brought to the forefront the problems that had been exercising the minds of the Boer leaders, and were now to loom over other people interested in South Africa. The chief of these problems were: 1. The legal rights of the emigrant Boers to the boundaries of the lands they occupied or claimed. 2. The labour or slavery of Africans and their possession of ~~land~~ rights. 3. The possession of guns and ammunition ~~by~~, or ^{their sale to Africans} or outside military assistance ~~with regard to~~ ^{impact and} Africans. The repercussions of these problems we shall now notice with regard to Montshiwa and his tribe.

Shortly after the conclusion of the Sand River Convention, Commandant Pieter Scholtz, the highest authority in the Lichtenburg district convened a meeting of all the chiefs living on the Molopo

Die ondergeskikte kapteins mog met toesteming van die witman in hulle krale bly woon mits hulle nie die rus verstoort nie. Hulle was verplig om van tyd tot tyd diensvolk vir hulle blanke bekeranhere te verskaf.

Ingeboorlinge wat nie onder die jurisdiksie van een of ander naturelle kaptein gestaan het nie was verplig om die Boere onder kontrak diens te doen, en weeskinders is vir 'n bepaalde tyd by witbase ingeboek

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