

MONTSHIWA

INTRODUCTION: There was probably no black man in South Africa, whose name was ^{so} much in the mouth of the public and the press, in the middle and towards the end of the 19th Century as that of Montshiwa (or Montsioa as it has been corrupted.) There was certainly no better known African name in South Africa and England in those years commencing in 1880 and ending 1886, and no person was more admired, lionised, petted, courted, and caressed by the one European section, while he was at the same time hated abused, cursed, villified and damned by the other section. Such is the person whose life it is intended to sketch in these pages - Montshiwa, chief of the Tshidi branch of the Barolong tribe. Since prehistoric times, the African tribe known as the Barolong has inhabited the high plateau right in the ^{centre} center of South Africa. This table-land is 4,500 feet above sea level and forms the watershed of the affluents of the Limpopo - (Crocodile or Udi) River on the East, and the much smaller Molopo river on the West.

It is supposed by ethnologists that in the fifteenth, sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, these people were forced to migrate southwards from their traditional home in Central Africa by inter-tribe wars, due to many tribes in equatorial Africa pushing one another southward in the same manner as railway trucks push each other.

The Barolong people were first introduced to ^{written} records and history/1823 by a humble missionary-Samuel Broadbent who met a section of them during their migration for the same reason of war. This section finally settled at Thabanchu near Basutoland in what is now the Orange Free State, under their chief Moroka.

Under this chief, and here at Thabanchu they first made history, so far back as the time of the Great Trek in 1836 by showing ^{friendship} friendship and hospitality to Hendrik Potgieter and his trek party in their hour of distress and peril.

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The first historical mention and writing of the name 'Montshiwa' was probably at this time, in the decade 1830 - 1840. It would be, of course by the Barolong ~~tribe~~ missionary James Archbell and his colleagues, and possibly by the kindly and interesting diarist the eerwarde^a Erasmus Smit, ^aspiritual guide of the Potgieter voortrekker party. The name might also appear in the historical records of the time, when the Barolong princes - the sons of Moroka and Tawana at Thabancha led for^aays against the Basotho, and came frequently into collision with the sons of Moshoeshoe to the latter's annoyance at their thieving propensities.

We are on surer ground when we come down a decade later to the ~~year~~ year 1850. Montshiwa's father and his section of the Barolong had left Thabancha for their home on the Molopo river; Montshiwa had soon succeeded^e his father Tawana in the chieftainship of the Tshidi branch of the Barolong at Lotlhakane, and was receiving verbal and ~~at~~ written communications from his Dutch-Afrikaner neighbours exhilarated by the munificence^e of the Sand River Convention of 1852.

The name of Montshiwa and that of the Tshidi Barolong comes prominently into the lime light of history in connection with the disputes of the diamond fields (1871) in which Moroka and Montshiwa, among others, claimed ownership of the diamondiferous lands. We meet them again^{associated} with^{the name of} Matlaba in the boundary disputes of the western^{These disputes} Transvaal of 1881 to 1885, which were the ~~representation~~ repercussions of the Transvaal War of Independence, ~~and~~ which culminated in the famous Majuba episodeⁱ in Natal, ^{but were only terminated by} and the Warren Expedition in Bechuanalandⁱⁿ 1885. In these controversies, Montshiwa comes much into prominence and has much praise accorded him by the English people and equally as much abuse heaped on him by the Dutch - Afrikaner people. His name is now associated with that of Moshete (Moshett) another Barolong chief, but always on the obverse side. That is to say that when praise and

approbation are heaped on the one, censure and approbrium are hurled at the other vice versa.

Finally we meet Montshiwa and his Barolong in connection with the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902 when they fought side by side with the British in defence of their town of Mafikeng which was besieged with the European town of Mafikeng^{e i} by the Transvaal commandos, and defended~~ed~~ by Maj-Gen Baden-Powell.

. Above we have mentioned Moshete, Montsiwa, Moroka and Matlaba.

All these are Barolong chieftains; each of them the principal chief of one or another of the four main sections of the Barolong tribe, these divisions being ^{the} Ratlou at Khunwana in the Lichtenburg District and also at Setlagole, Kraaipan, Madibogo, Metsitlane, Phitshane, Tshidilamelomo in the Mafikeng^{e i} District, and at Ganyesa and Morokweng in the Vryburg District; (b) the Tshidi branch at Mafikeng^{e i}, (c) the Seleka branch at Thabanchu, and (d) the Rapulana branch at Lotlhakane (Reitfontein) in the Mafikeng^{e i} District and also at Bodibe (Polfontein) in the Lichtenburg District.

These sections or branches of the Barolong tribe originate from one common stem and their chiefs descend from one man - Tau, who was king of one great Barolong tribe in former times.

These former times are however, near enough to leave us in no

doubt about the rank and precedence according to seniority of *of the chiefs, that order of precedence according to seniority* birth/being derived from the order of the sons of Tau and perpe-

tuated in their progeny, and that order being Ratlou, Tshidi, ^{their}

Makgetla, Seleka, Rapulana, represented at present by ^{Phetlhu} their offspring in Moshete, Montshiwa, Moroka and Matlaba, respectively.

Montblanca had recently died - but his name was still fresh
and strong in the hearts of his friends, as much as
it was affectionately remembered by his friends

ANTECEDENTS AND GENEALOGY: Montshiwa was born in or about the year 1815 the year of the famous battle of Waterloo which encompassed the fall of Napoleon. The month was probably August.

The date is arrived at by reference to the average age of ~~M~~ Montshiwa's regiment or age-group or mophato - the Mantwa, who were born between 1812 and 1817 and were initiated into manhood in 1832. Montshiwa, being a chief's son would be among the youngest of his group at the time of initiation. The date is also arrived at by collation of famous events in the history of the Tshidi and other branches of the Barolong tribe such as the invasion of the ^NMathatisi herds and the sack of Khunwana by the Matebele; also by estimates of Travellers like Emil Holub and missionaries like John Mackenzie.

1760 The great king Tau of the Barolong had died a warrior's death ^{about the} ~~in~~ ¹⁷⁶⁰ ~~1660~~. In spite of occasional hivings-off from the mother tribe owing to differences ~~tribe~~ and disputes about succession, the numerous and powerful Barolong tribe had, during many years of southward migration and inter-tribal wars mostly kept together as a compact body owing allegiance to one king, down to the time of of Tau, 14th of 15th in descent from Morolong the traditional and half-mythical founder of the tribe.

Tau was a great warrior, and ^{when} he died at Taung about the year ¹⁷⁶⁰ ~~1660~~ the awe which he had inspired among the surrounding tribes came to a sudden end, and as one they ~~rose~~ ^{rose} to shake off the irksome ^{their} yoke of ~~their~~ Barolong overlords.

Under the comparatively weak leadership of Nthufa- Tau's ^{before} younger brother and regent for Tau's sons, the Barolong fled ~~from~~ their enemies from one encampment to another until they came to ^{abode -} ~~their former~~ ¹⁷⁷⁰ ~~Setlagole~~ about 1770, which they made their permanent home.

With external danger removed, internal dissensions arose, resulting in the breaking ^{up} of the tribe into five sections each acknowledging one or another of the five sons of Tau as its king. These sons of Tau are, in order of seniority- Ratlou, Tshidi, Makgetla,

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2-5

Foot Note: Tau had other sons - but they are insignificant.

Seleka and Rapulana, whence we have ^{the} Ratlou Barolong, the Tshidi Barolong, the Makgetla Barolong, the Seleka Barolong and the Rapulana Barolong. X This graphic schema may be useful:

- TAU X.1 Kgamana daughter of Morakile ---Ratlou, Modisa
- X.2 Kabasana " " Mabule ---Tshidi
- X.3 Motshwaabangwe " ?? ---Makgetla, Maleme, Masetlha
- X.4 Moshwaana " ?? ---Seleka, Rapulana, & Ramhitshana

N.B. X means married

--> " begot

From the seconds of these sons of Tau, namely Tshidi, Montshiwa descends. Tshidi is however no more than a titular ^{or} nominal founder of the Barolong clan. From ^{the} ~~its~~ very emergence ^{of the clan}, authority was veiled on his behalf by Makgetla of the third house, who was much older ^{than Tshidi} and on affectionate terms with Kabasana - Tshidi's mother.

After an undistinguished career, Tshidi was killed in a battle against the Digoja, a primitive Bataung tribe somewhere about Mamusa (the present Schweizer-Reneke) about the year 1775.

1775

- TSHIDI X.1 Maetswane --- Mojanku, Mojankunyana, Thutlwa TLHUTLWA
- X.2 Khukhu ---Mokgothu
- X.3 Khukhwane ---Leshomo, Mabina
- X.4 ?? ---Thatane, Mangwegape.

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To Tshidi are credited several children, namely Mojanku, Mojankunyana, ^lThutlwa, Mokgothu, Leshomo, Mabina and Mangwegape, by several wives, and in that order of rank.

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Under Makgetla, the re-united Tshidi and Makgetla ~~xx~~ clans now left Setlagole and settled at Phitshane, while the Seleka and Rapulana clans also ^{left and} went to Lotlhakane, leaving the Setlagole ^{the} commonwealth to ^{the} angry Ratlou clan. At Phitshane the Tshidi-Makgetla clan was invaded by the Ratlou clan under Modirwagale - a senior son of Ratlou. In the battle that ensued ^lThutlwa the ~~see~~

scion of the Tshidi family and ward of Makgetla was killed, ^{leaving} ~~leaving~~
Makgetla the virtual chief of the Tshidi - Makgetla clan. ^{Tshutwa} ~~He~~
was survived by his wives and several children, some of them
natural, most of them putative; ^{of the latter being} and some others raised to him long
after his death.

Makgetla was forced to vacate Phitshane and moved to
towards ~~fort~~ ^{Setlopo} adjacent to the Seleka and
Rapulana clans at ~~fort~~ ^{Setlopo}.

In Tswana law, if a man, and especially a man of royal rank - dies and leaves a widow, and especially if he dies childless, one of his brothers may legitimately procreate with his widow (or widows). The children so raised are counted to the deceased. Thus a man dying, say in 1960 can have children born to him in 1962 and subsequent years. Even if he dies in early youth prior to his marriage, a brother may take a woman to whom the deceased was betrothed, or for that matter any woman, and beget children with her on behalf of his deceased brother. This is termed 'raising the seed to the deceased' or 'keeping the fire burning in the house of the deceased'. It is an attempt at perpetuity; it is almost a defiance of mortality.

The children so raised are regarded in every respect as coming from the loins of the deceased, and they enjoy his status and rights to the fullest extent. Such were some of the sons of Tau, and such their issue; such were most of the issue of Tshidi, and such some if not most of the issue of Tshidi's son Thutlwa, and such also of the issue of their predecessors for centuries and some centuries before. It is known among antiquarians that Tshidi the putative son of Tau was in fact the natural son of Seleka, the eldest of Tau's own sons, that Thutlwa and his brother Mokgothu, the putative sons of Tshidi were in point of fact the natural sons of Makgatla - Tshidi's half brother. It is even said that Tau and his brother Tawana the father of Montshiwa and Molema and others - Tau and Tawana though supposed to be Thutlwa's sons were, in point of fact the natural sons of Mokgothu, Thutlwa's brother of junior rank. What a confusion of inheritance: What a muddle of succession and succession of muddle and confusion. It requires no great stretch of imagination to visualise the irregularities and disorder that thus imported into kingly succession, and to realise the reasons for the frequent disputes and divisions arising therefrom. This was the reason, as we shall see later, why Leshomo, installed as regent for Tawana, refused to vacate the seat for him. Contrary to

In the heretic tales, paragoned or phrase differences being used to effect in honor of Tawana and his son Montshiwa, they are generally referred to as Tshidi's sons Mokgothu. That is completely or excellently of mysterious descent from Mokgothu.

uncle of Tawana

him

law, he maintained that Tawana was the son of his (Leshomo's) ~~young~~ younger brother - Mokgothu.

As the wards of the Tshidi Barolong clan are still graded according to the rank of Thutlwa's sons, and as Thutlwa is Montshiwa's ^{grand} ~~great~~ father, it is well to ^{enumerate} ~~describe~~ Thutlwa's children. They are Tau and Tawana and Moshwela by the first house - composed of three sisters - Morwa, Morwanyane and Motshidisi, daughters of Phetlhu Makgetla, and married as one person to supplement each other, a thing which can only happen in Tswana life. Then comes Lekgetho adopted and interpolated into the second house, very much as Moroka placed his adopted son Tshipinare above his (Moroka's) ~~own~~ own children. Next comes Masetlha by the third house, then Legae and Lekone by the fourth house and ⁱ ~~finally~~ Matsheka. ^{This may be represented} ~~Schematic-~~

- lly/- ^{TLHUTLWA} THUTLWA x.1 (a) Morwa, daughter of Makgetla -- Tau
as follows: (b) Morwanyane " " " -- Tawana
(c) Motshidisi " " " -- Moshwela
x.2 Ma-Lekgetho with issue Lekgetho
x.3 Mmu, daughter of Maetso -- Masetlha
x.4 Kefalotse " " Motlhaku -- Legae, Lekone
x.5 Masukutswane " Nthufa -- Matsheka.

With the demise of ^l Thutlwa, Mekgetla, who had successfully amalga-
mated the Tshidi and Makgetla clans ^{became} ~~and had been~~ regent for Tawana -
the highest ranking of ^l Thutlwa's surviving sons. He was thus the
effective ruler of the Tshidi-Makgetla union for three ~~generations~~.
*He was first regent for Tshidi, then regent for Tshidi's son
Thutlwa, and then finally regent for Thutlwa's son Tawana.*

Bad blood and a constant state of war existed between the Tshidi - Makgetla tribe and the Bahurutshe tribes of Madikwena (Marico) under Kontle and Manyana. In one of the frequent clashes between them, Mokgothu, younger brother of Thutlwa was slain. Soon after, about 1790 Makgetla led a powerful army ~~to~~ against the clan of Manyana to avenge this death of Mokgothu. He carried all before him, utterly routed them and captured many cattle, but at the very end of the battle he was himself ^{mortally} fatally wounded. Leshomo, the eldest surviving brother of Thutlwa and Mokgothu was now appointed regent for Tawana a lad of about 15 years.

1790
About 1800 Leshomo the new regent moved from Lotlhakane to Ga-Tshebethwane near the present Disaneng. This he was forced to do by the frequent attacks of the Bushmen, and also because Modirwagale, who had driven the Tshidi people from Phitshane 16 miles further west had been crushed by Mokalaka and had fled to the Batlhaping, where he subsequently died. Ga-Tshebethwane lies

1800
1814
P/ in the wedge formed by the confluence of the Molopo River and Ramatlabama spruit. ^{Here} In 1814 serious trouble developed between Leshomo and his nephew Tawana, for whom he had been now acting for about 24 years, and showed no inclination ^{to vacate} of vacating ^{the} the seat for its rightful owner, although Tawana was now a man of 30 years and had several wives and children.

By his first wife Dikgang, who by the way was Leshomo's daughter, he had already four daughters ^{namely} (f.n. Morwanyane, Motshidisi, Mamoraila and Manca). By his second wife - ^{a Molekane} Mosela, a princess of the Rapulana clan of the Barolong tribe, he had four sons, -

Seetsela, Tlala, Metshegare and Molema, and a daughter Majagg.

^{now} And his third wife ^e Sebudie the daughter of Phetlhu was expectant. Here comes another interesting Tswana custom. Sebudie, although married third in point of time was / recognised as Tawana's principal wife, and therefore Tawana's issue by her took precedence of rank above his issue by other wives, even though such children

Collection Number: A979

Silas T MOLEMA and Solomon T PLAATJE Papers

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand

Location:- Johannesburg

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